

AINSLEE'S

THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS



*Continued
For May*

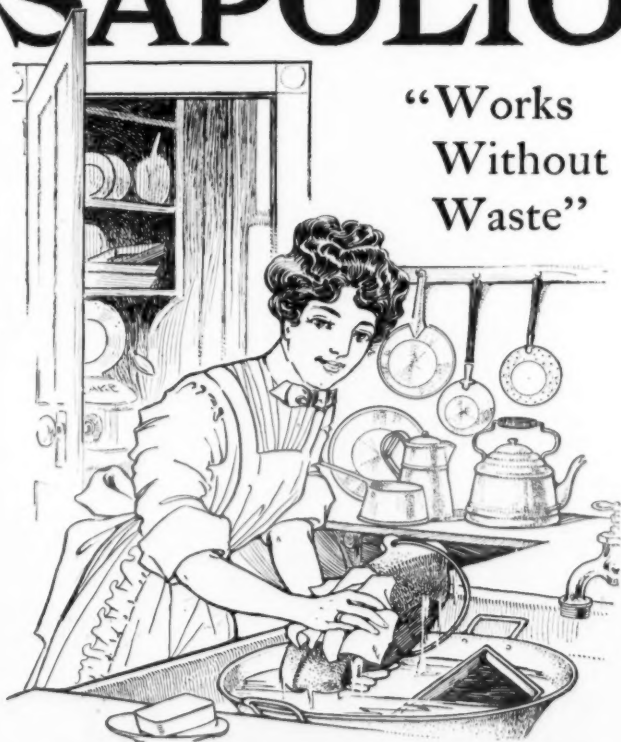
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Ainslee's for June

Concerning Strawberries and Prunes

Once in his early boarding-house days when Eugene Field was dining with some of his more prosperous friends, large, luscious, red strawberries were passed.

Field mournfully shook his head.

"Why, don't you care for strawberries?" asked his host, with a trace of disappointment.

"Care for them?" echoed Field sadly. "That's just it. I'm afraid they'll spoil my taste for prunes."

Good reasoning, that. But if strawberries were always in season; if they cost no more than prunes—well, AINSLEE'S always is in season, and incidentally its price is lower than that of any other magazine of the same class.

The complete novel in June AINSLEE'S will be "The House of Peril," by MRS. BELLOC LOWNDES.

The color and sparkle of this little French town, the fortune teller's strange prophecy, the mysterious disappearance of Anna Olsen, the rivalry between her own countryman and the French count for the heart of the young American heroine, the big, black trunk in the house of peril—all go to make a tale of romance and mystery that well deserves a place in AINSLEE'S. And AINSLEE'S is "the magazine that entertains."

Sixteen short stories are scheduled for June, and they are, without exception, "AINSLEE short stories." This increase in number is made possible by the discontinuance, at the suggestion of many of our readers, of the serial feature.

"If a continued story is a good story," writes one subscriber, "as AINSLEE'S almost invariably have been, the reader is raised to a high pitch of interest, suddenly deserted, and asked to sustain this high pitch of interest through all the births, deaths, punctured tires, and household annoyances of the next three or four weeks. Let his interest once begin to flag, and by the time the next installment reaches him he is no longer where he last left off. In place of the serial give us more short stories. For all that we readers know it may be depriving us of some new MARGARETTA TUTTLE, an undiscovered JOSEPH LINCOLN, another KATE JORDAN, or some budding FRANK CONDON . . ."

The characters created by MARGARETTA

TUTTLE in her Nadine Carson stories would seem more like delightful well-bred people than mere fiction characters were it not that they are *always* entertaining, something that cannot be said of even the most brilliant of our friends in real life. "The Hour Between" is the title of the June story in this series.

FRANK CONDON has captured a little slice of that elusive something called spring, and has put it down on paper for us with all his usual unusual humor.

The daily papers are filled with news and rumors of dissension and fighting in Mexico. What is happening? What will happen? Probably nothing one-half so convincing, one-half so dramatic as "The Last Man," an absorbing story of the Mexican Sierras, by HERMAN WHITAKER.

"The Savage" is one of the most colorful and magnetic stories that F. BERKELEY SMITH has yet given us. "The Mirror on the Wall" has that inimitable charm that is expected from FANNY H. LEA, and "Miss Democracy" does credit even to KATE JORDAN.

Three stories of the West in this coming number are as varied as the great territory of which they are characteristic. ELLIOTT FLOWER's amusing "silly-awss" Englishman, Alphabet Applegate, is at it again, this time in "The Flight of Beatrice." "Marooned on Tuscarora," by EDYTH A. ELLERBECK, is a dramatic story of a woman civil engineer, who combines masculine courage with feminine charm. "The Snow-blind Man," G. H. PRESTON's stirring story of Alaska, deals with primitive justice, and the choice of a fugitive between the path of freedom and the human impulse to save a helpless human being.

Those who read CONSTANCE SKINNER's powerful novel, "A Man and His Mate," in March, will welcome "Divorced," a short story, equally powerful, in this number.

OWEN OLIVER, F. T. COOPER, JANE W. GUTHRIE, SAMUEL GORDON, JOHNSON MORTON, and J. S. FLETCHER contribute the balance of the fiction. As a whole we feel that the June AINSLEE'S is well rounded, entertaining, and full of sparkle and life. We are almost satisfied with it.



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THIS, the fifth of the series of our offers of prizes for the best opinions as to current magazine fiction, has brought us an even greater stream of letters than any of the former competitions. They are good letters, too, most of them from the sort of people we had hoped were AINSLEE readers. The judges of this competition, after due deliberation, have decided upon the following awards:

First Prize of \$50.00 to

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Second Prize of \$30.00 to

M. M. SIMONS, Del Norte, Col.

Third Prize of \$20.00 to

HARRIET E. WERTS, Jersey City, N. J.

We know that AINSLEE's is a good magazine. If we can believe the letters that have been pouring in to us—and a surprising number of them are convincing and discriminating—AINSLEE's is the *best* magazine. And, with the help of the many friendly suggestions received during these competitions, we are going to turn out an AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE that shall be even

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VOL. XXVII

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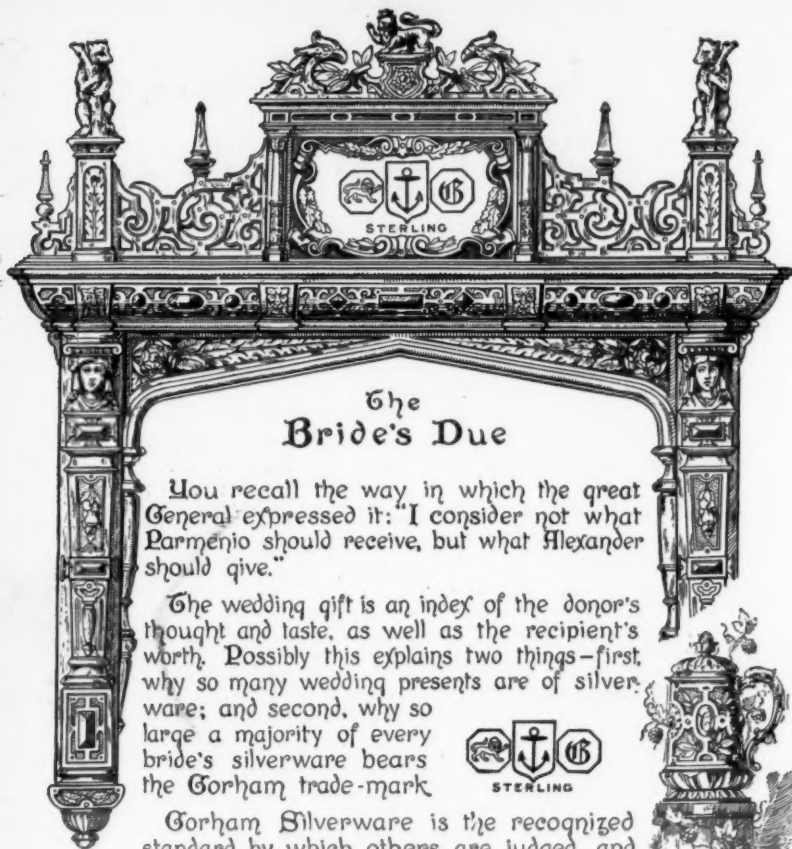
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Immediate Success of the original announcement in November, 4,157 applications being received in the first 30 days, made it apparent very soon that all preliminary estimates of the probable early demand would have to be disregarded. The printing order was then increased to 17,000 sets, all of which had been subscribed for by the end of February. Undoubtedly the

Low Price of \$4.00 a volume was the chief factor which called forth so many early subscriptions. The old 9th Edition (25 volumes, 850 pages each) cost \$7.50 a volume in Cloth, and \$10.00 in Half Russia. The new edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica averages

1,000 Pages a volume, and contains more than 40,000,000 words. In view of its broad usefulness as an instrument of popular culture and as a trustworthy guide to sound learning, the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press (the English University of Cambridge having taken over the copyright) regarded it as an especial part of their obligation to the public, in giving the new work the *imprimatur* of the University, to offer it at a popular price.

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Editorial Cost of \$815,000 and the total cost, including typesetting, plates, maps, etc., of \$1,150,000, are yet to be recovered, so that the distribution of the Encyclopaedia Britannica at the present prices is absolutely without regard to profits, and it is necessary that the publishers shall charge for the second distribution considerably more than is now asked. The low

Advance-of-Publication Price will, however, have served a useful purpose if it shall prove to be the means of effecting a distribution of the work quickly among the more intelligent bookbuyers and among libraries, institutions, and learned societies, for the reason that their endorsement of the new Encyclopaedia Britannica will give it ultimately the same position in public estimation that has always been accorded to the work in ten previous and successful editions since the first edition appeared in 1768-71.

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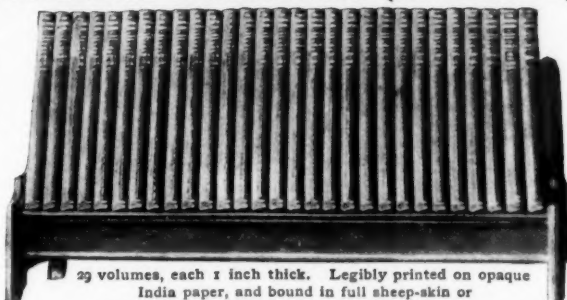
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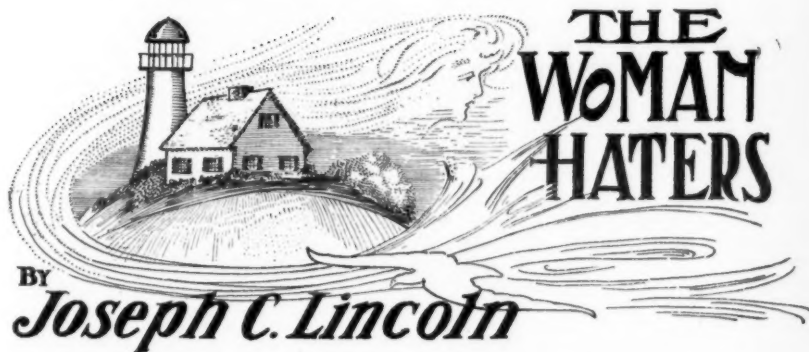
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AINSLEE'S

VOL. XXVII.

MAY, 1911.

No. 4.



CHAPTER I.

THE stars, like incandescent lights fed by a fast-weakening dynamo, grew pale, faded, and, one by one, went out. The slate-colored sea, with its tumbling waves, changed color, becoming a light gray, then a faint blue, and, as the red sun rolled up over the edge of the eastern horizon, a brilliant sapphire, trimmed with silver-white on the shoals and along the beach at the foot of the bluff.

Seth Atkins, keeper of Eastboro Twin Lights, yawned, stretched, and glanced through the seaward windows of the octagon-shaped, glass-inclosed room at the top of the north tower, where he had spent the night just passed. Then he rose from his chair and extinguished the blaze in the great lantern beside him.

Morning had come, the mists had rolled away, and the dots scattered along the horizon—schooners, tugs, and coal barges, for the most part—no longer needed the glare of Eastboro Twin Lights to warn them against close

proximity to the dangerous, shoal-bordered coast of the Cape.

Incidentally it was no longer necessary for Mr. Atkins to remain on watch. He drew the curtains over the polished glass and brass of the lantern, yawned again, and descended the winding iron stairs to the door at the foot of the tower, opened it, and emerged into the sandy yard.

Crossing this yard, before the small, white house which the government provided as a dwelling place for its light keepers, he opened the door of the south tower, mounted the stairs there, and repeated the extinguishing process with the other lantern. Before again descending to earth, however, he stepped out on the iron balcony surrounding the light chamber, and looked about him.

The view, such as it was, was extensive. To the east the open sea, the wide Atlantic, rolling lazily in the morning light, a faint breeze rippling the surfaces of the ground swell. A few sails in sight, far out. Not a sound except the hiss and splash of the surf, which, because of a week of calms and light

winds, was low, even for that time of year—early June.

To the north and south stretched the shores of the back of the Cape. High, clay bluffs, rain-washed and wrinkled, sloping sharply to the white sand of the beach a hundred feet below. Only one building, except those connected with the lighthouses, in sight; this a small, gray-shingled bungalow about two hundred yards away, separated from the lights by the narrow channel called "Clam Creek"—Seth always spoke of it as the "Crick"—which, turning in behind the long, surf-beaten sandspit, known for some forgotten reason as "Black Man's Point," continued to the salt-water pond which was named "The Cove." A path led down from the lighthouses to a bend in the "Crick"; and there, on a small wharf, was a shanty where Seth kept his spare lobster and eel pots, dory sails, nets, and the like. The dory itself, with the oars in her, was moored in the cove.

Behind the lighthouse buildings, to the west, was nothing in particular except sand dunes, beach grass, huckleberry and bayberry bushes, cedar swamps, and mosquitoes. More mosquitoes than anything else, according to Ezra Payne, late assistant keeper of Eastboro Twin Lights.

"My godfreys domino!" Ezra had exclaimed, after returning from the six-mile drive to Eastboro village. "I give you my word, Seth, they dummed nigh et me alive. They covered the horse all up so that he looked for all the world like a sheep—woolly. I don't mind moskeeters in moderation, but when they roost on my eyelids and make 'em so heavy I can't open 'em, then I'm ready to swear. But I couldn't get even that relief, because every time I unbattened my mouth, a million or so flew in and choked me. That's what I said—a million. Some moskeeters are fat, but these don't get a square meal often enough to be anythin' but hide-racks filled with cussedness. Moskeeters! My godfreys domino!"

Ezra was no longer assistant light keeper. He and his superior had quarreled two days before. The quarrel was

the culmination, on Ezra's part, of a gradually developing "grouch" brought on by the loneliness of his surroundings. After a night of duty, he had marched into the house, packed his belongings in a battered canvas extension case, and announced his intention of resigning from the service.

"To the everlastin' brimstone with the job!" he snarled, addressing Mr. Atkins, who, partially dressed, emerged from the bedroom in bewilderment and sleepy astonishment. "To thunder with it, I say! I've had all the gov'ment jobs I want. Life-savin' service was bad enough, trampin' the condemned beach in a howlin' no'theaster, with the sand cuttin' furrers in your face, and the icicles on your mustache so heavy you got round-shouldered luggin' 'em. But when your tramp was over you had somebody to talk to. Here, by godfreys, there ain't nothin' nor nobody. I'm goin' fishin' again, where I can be sociable."

"Humph!" commented Seth. "You must be lonesome all to once. Ain't my company good enough for you?"

"Company! A heap of company you are! When I'm awake, you're asleep and snorin' and——"

"I never snored in my life," was the indignant interruption.

"What? *You'll* snore when you're dead, and wake up the whole graveyard. Lonesome!" he continued, without giving his companion a chance to retort. "Lonesome ain't no name for this place. No company but green flies and them moskeeters, and nothin' to look at but salt water and sand and—and—dummed if I can think of anything else. Six mile from town, and the only house in sight shut tight. When I come here you told me that bungalow was opened up every year."

"So it has been till this season."

"And that picnics come here every once in a while."

"Don't expect picnickers to be such crazy loons as to come here in winter-time, do you?"

"I don't know. If they're fools enough to come here *any* time, I wouldn't be responsible for 'em. There

ain't so many moskeeters in winter. But just *look* at this hole. Just put on your specs and *look* at it! Not a man—but you—not a woman, not a child, not a girl——”

“Ah, ha! Ah, ha! *Now* we're gettin' at it! Not a girl! That's what's the matter with you. You want to be up in the village where you can go courtin'. You're too fur from Elsie Peters; that's where the shoe pinches. I've heard how you used to set out in her dad's back yard, with your arm around her waist, lookin' at each other, mushy as a couple of sassers of hasty puddin'. Bah! I'll take care my next assistant ain't girl struck.”

“Girl struck! I'd enough sight ruther be girl struck than always ravin' and rippin' against females; and all because that woman over to Hyannis, somewhere back in Methusalem's time, had sense enough to heave you over. You pretend to be a woman hater. All round this part of the Cape you've took pains to get up that kind of reputation; but——”

“There ain't no pretendin' about it. I've got brains enough to keep clear of petticoats. And when you get to be as old as I be, and know as much as I do—though that ain't noways likely, even if you live to be nine hundred and odd like Noah in Scripture—you'll——”

“Aw, come off! Woman hater! You hate women same as the boy at the poor-house hated ice cream; 'cause there wa'n't none around. Why, I wouldn't trust you as fur as I could see you!”

This was the end of the dialogue, because Mr. Payne was obliged to break off his harangue and dodge the stove lifter, flung at him by the outraged light keeper. As the lifter was about to be followed by the teakettle, Ezra took to his heels, bolted from the house, and began his long tramp to the village. When he reached the first clumps of bayberry bushes bordering the deeply rutted road, a joyful cloud of mosquitoes rose, and settled about him like a fog.

So Seth Atkins was left alone to do double duty at Eastboro Twin Lights, pending the appointment of another assistant. The two days and nights fol-

lowing Ezra's departure had been strenuous and provoking. Doing all the housework, preparation of meals included, tending both lights, rubbing brass work, sweeping and scouring, sleeping when he could and keeping awake when he must, nobody to talk to, nobody to help—the forty-eight hours of solitude had already convinced Mr. Atkins that the sooner a helper was provided the better. At times he even wished the disrespectful Payne back again, wished that he had soothed instead of irritated the departed one. Then he remembered certain fragments of their last conversation, and wished the stove lifter had been flung with better aim.

Now, standing on the gallery of the south tower, he was conscious of a desire for breakfast. Preparing that meal had been a part of his assistant's duties. Now he must prepare it himself, and he was hungry and sleepy. He mentally vowed that he would no longer delay notifying the authorities of the desertion, and would urge them to hurry in sending some one to fill the vacant place.

Grumbling aloud to himself, he moved around the circle of the gallery toward the door. His hand was on the latch, when, turning, he cast another glance over the rail, this time directly downward toward the beach below. And there he saw something which caused him to forget hunger and grievances of all kinds; something which, after one horrified look to make sure, led him to dart into the light chamber, spring at a reckless gait down the winding stair, out of the tower, rush to the edge of the bluff, and plunge headlong down the zigzag path worn in the clay.

On the sand, at the foot of the bluff below the lights, just beyond reach of the wash of the surf, lay a man, or the dead body of a man, stretched at full length.

CHAPTER II.

Once before, during his twelve years' service as keeper of Eastboro Twin Lights, had Seth seen such a sight as that which now caused him to make his dash for the shore. Once before, after

the terrible storm of '98, when the great steamer, *Bay Queen*, went down with all on board, the exact spot of her sinking unknown even to this day. Then the whole ocean side of the Cape, from Race Point to Orham, was strewn with ghastly relics. But the *Bay Queen* met her fate in the winter season, amid a gale such as even the oldest residents could not remember. Now it was early summer; the night before had been a flat calm. There had been no wreck, or the life-savers would have told him of it. There would be no excuse for a wreck.

All this, in disjointed fragments, passed through the light keeper's mind as he descended the path in frantic bounds, and plowed through the ankle-deep, white sand of the beach. As he approached the recumbent figure, he yelled and panted: "Hi, there!" He did not expect the hail to be answered or even noticed. Therefore, he was pleasantly disappointed when the figure rolled over, raised itself on one elbow, looked at him in a dazed sort of way, and replied cheerfully but faintly: "Hello!"

Seth stopped short, put a hand to the breast of his blue flannel shirt, and breathed a mighty sigh of relief.

"Gosh!" he exclaimed, with fervor.

Then, changing his labored gallop for a walk, he continued his progress toward the man, who, as if his momentary curiosity was satisfied, lay down again. He did not rise when the light keeper reached his side, but remained quiet, looking up from a pair of gray eyes, and smiling slightly with lips that were blue. He was a stranger to Atkins. A young fellow, rather good-looking, dressed in blue serge trousers, negligee shirt, blue socks, and without shoes or hat. His garments were soaked, and the salt water dripped from his shoulders to the sand. The light keeper stared at him, and he returned the stare.

"Gosh!" repeated Seth, after an instant of silence. "Gosh! I feel better."

The stranger's smile broadened. "Glad to hear it, I'm sure," he said slowly. "So do I, though there's still room for improvement. What was your particular ailment? Mine seems to have been water on the brain."

He sat up, and shakily ran a hand through his wet hair as he spoke. Atkins, his surprise doubled by this extraordinary behavior, could think of nothing to say.

"Good morning," continued the young man, as if the meeting had been the most casual and ordinary possible. "I think you said a moment ago that you were feeling better. No relapse, I trust."

"Relapse? What in the world? Are you crazy? I ain't sick."

"That's good. I must have misunderstood you. Pleasant morning, isn't it?"

"Pleasant morn— Why, say! I—I—what in time are you doin', layin' there all soaked through? You scared me pretty nigh to death. I thought you was drowned, sure and sartin."

"Did you? Well, to be honest, so did I, for a while. In fact, I'm not absolutely sure that I'm not even yet. You'll excuse me if I lie down again, won't you? I never tried a seaweed pillow before, but it isn't so bad."

He again stretched himself on the sand. Seth shook his head.

"Well, if this don't beat me!" he gasped. "You're the coolest critter that ever I—I—"

"I am cool," admitted the young man, with a slight shiver. "This stretch of ocean here isn't exactly a Turkish bath. I've been swimming since—well, an hour or two ago, and I am just a little chilled."

He shivered again.

"Swimmin'! An hour or two? Where on earth did you ever come from?"

"Oh, I fell overboard from a steamer off here somewhere. I—"

Another and emphatic shiver caused him to pause. The light keeper awoke to the realities of the situation.

"Good land of love!" he exclaimed. "What am I thinkin' of? Seein' you this way, and you talkin' so kind of everyday and funny, drove my senses clean out, I guess. Get right up off that wet place this minute. Come up to the house, quick! Can you walk?"

"Don't know. I am willing to try. Would you mind giving me a lift?"

Seth didn't mind, which was fortunate, as his new acquaintance couldn't have risen unaided. His knees shook under him when he stood erect, and he leaned heavily on the light keeper's arm.

"Steady now," counseled Atkins; "no hurry. Take it easy. If you've navigated water all alone for hours, I cal'late between us we can manage to make a five-minute cruise on dry land. Even if the course we steer would make an eel lame tryin' to follow it," he added, as the castaway staggered and reeled up the beach. "Now, don't try to talk. Let your tongue rest and give your feet a chance."

The climbing of the steep bluff was a struggle, but they accomplished it, and at length the stranger was seated in a chair in the kitchen.

"Now, the fust thing," observed Seth, "is to get them wet clothes off you. Usually I'd have a good fire here, but that miserable Ezry has—that is, my assistant's left me, and I have to go it alone, as you might say. So we'll get you to bed, and— No, you can't undress yourself, neither. Set still, and I'll have you peeled in a jiffy."

His guest was making feeble efforts to remove his socks. Atkins pushed him back into the chair, and stripped the blue and dripping rags from feet which were almost as blue from cold. The castaway attempted a weak resistance, but gave it up, and said:

"I'm mightily obliged to you. I never realized before that a valet was such a blessing. Most of mine have been confounded nuisances."

"Hey?" queried Seth, looking up.

"Nothing. Pardon me for comparing you with a valet."

"Land sakes! I don't care what you call me. I was out of my head once myself—typhoid fever 'twas—and they say the things I called the doctor was somethin' scandalous. You ain't responsible. You're beat out, and your brain's weak, like the rest of you. Now, hold on till I get you a nightgown."

He started for the bedroom. The young man seemed a bit troubled.

"Just a minute," he observed. "Don't you think I had better move to a less conspicuous—er—apartment? The door is open, and if any of your neighbors should happen by—any ladies, for instance, I—"

"Ladies!" Mr. Atkins regarded him frowningly. "In the fust place, there ain't a neighbor nigher'n four mile; and in the next, I'd have you understand no women come to this house. If you knew me better, young feller, you'd know that. Set where you be."

The nightshirt was one of the light keeper's own, and, although Seth was a good-sized man, it fitted the castaway almost too tightly for comfort. However, it was dry and warm, and, by leaving a button or two unfastened at the neck, answered the purpose well enough. The stranger was piloted to the bedroom, assisted into the depths of a feather bed, and covered with several layers of blankets and patchwork quilts.

"There!" observed Seth contentedly. "Now you go to sleep. If you get to sweatin', so much the better. 'Twill get some of that cold water out of you. So long!"

He departed, closing the door after him. Then he built a fire in the range, got breakfast; ate it, washed the dishes, and continued his forenoon's work. Not a sound from the bedroom. Evidently the strange arrival had taken the advice concerning going to sleep. But all the time he was washing dishes, rubbing brass work, or sweeping, Mr. Atkins' mind was busy with the puzzle which fate had handed him. Occasionally he chuckled, and often he shook his head. He could make nothing out of it. One thing only was certain—he had never before met a human being exactly like this specimen.

It was half-past twelve before there were signs of life in the bedroom. Seth was just setting the table for dinner when the door of the room opened a little way, and a voice said:

"I say! Are you there?"

"I be. What do you want?"

"Would you mind telling me what you've done with my clothes?"

"Not a bit. I've got 'em out on the

line, and they ain't dry yet. If you'll look on the chair by the sou'west window, you'll find a rig-out of mine. I'm afraid 'twill fit you too quick—you're such an elephant—but I'll risk it if you will."

Apparently the stranger was willing to risk it, for in a few moments he appeared, dressed in the Atkins' Sunday suit of blue cloth, and with Seth's pet carpet slippers on his feet.

"Hello!" was the light keeper's greeting. "How you feelin'? Better?"

"Tiptop, thank you. Where do you wash when it's necessary?"

"Basin right there in the sink. Soap in the becket over top of it. Roller towel on the closet door. Ain't you had water enough for a spell?"

"Not fresh water, thank you. I'm caked with salt from head to foot."

"Does make a feller feel like a split herrin' if he ain't used to it. Think you can eat anything?"

"Can I?" The response was enthusiastic. "You watch me! My last meal was yesterday noon."

"Yesterday noon! Didn't you eat no supper?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Well, I—well, to be frank, because I hadn't the price. It took my last cent to pay my fare on that blessed steamer."

"Great land of love! What time was it when you fell overboard?"

"Oh, I don't know. Two o'clock, perhaps."

"Two o'clock! What was you doin' up at two o'clock? Why wa'n't you in your stateroom asleep?"

"I hadn't any stateroom. Staterooms cost money."

"My soul! And you swum three hours on an empty stomach?"

"Not altogether. Part of it on my back. But, if you'll excuse familiarity on short acquaintance, those things you're cooking smell good to me."

"Them's clam fritters, and, if you'll excuse my sayin' so that shouldn't they are good. Set down and fill up."

The visitor ate nine of the fritters, a slice of apple pie, and drank two cups of coffee. Seth, between intervals of

frying and eating, watched him with tremendous curiosity and as much patience as he could muster. When the pie was finished, he asked the first of the questions with which he had been bursting all the forenoon.

"Tell me," he said, "how'd you come to fall overboard?"

"I'm not very certain just how it happened. I remember leaning over the rail and watching the waves. Then I was very dizzy all at once. The next thing I knew I was in the water."

"Dizzy, hey? Seasick, maybe."

"I guess not. I'm a pretty good sailor. I'm inclined to think the cause was that empty stomach you mentioned."

"Um—hm. You didn't have no supper. Still, you ate the noon afore."

"Not much. Only a sandwich."

"A sandwich! What did you have for breakfast?"

"Well, the fact is, I overslept, and decided to omit the breakfast."

"Gosh! No wonder you got dizzy. If I went without meals for a whole day, I cal'late I'd be worse than dizzy. What did you do when you found yourself in the water?"

"Yelled at first, but no one heard me. Then I saw some lights off in this direction, and started to swim for them. I made the shore finally, but I was so used up that I don't remember anything after the landing. Think I took a nap."

"I presume likely. Wonder 'twan't your everlastin' nap. Tut! Tut! Tut! Think of it!"

"I don't want to, thank you. It wasn't pleasant enough to think of. I'm here, and— By the way, where is here?"

"This is Eastboro Township—Eastboro, Cape Cod. Them lights out there are Eastboro Twin Lights. I'm the keeper of 'em. My name's Atkins, Seth Atkins."

"Delighted to meet you, Mr. Atkins. And tremendously obliged to you, besides."

"You needn't be. I ain't done nothin'. Let me see, you said your name was—"

"Did I?" The young man seemed startled, almost alarmed. "When?"

Seth was embarrassed, but not much.

"Well," he admitted, "I don't know's you did say it, come to think of it. What is your name?"

"My name?"

"Yes."

"Oh, why—my name is Brown—er—John Brown. Not the gentleman who was hanged, of course; distant relative, that's all."

"Hum! John Brown, hey? What steamer did you fall off of?"

"Why—why—I can't seem to remember. That's odd, isn't it?"

"Yes; I should say 'twas. Where was she bound?"

"Bound? Oh, you mean where was she going?"

"Sartin."

"I think—I think she was going to—to— Humph! How strange this is!"

"What?"

"Why, that I should forget all these things."

The light keeper regarded his guest with suspicion.

"Yaas," he drawled slowly, "when you call it strange, you ain't exaggeratin' none wuth mentionin'. I s'pose," he added, after a moment, during which he stared intently at Mr. Brown, who smiled in polite acknowledgment of the stare, "I s'pose likely you couldn't possibly remember what port you hailed from?"

"I suppose not," was the calm reply.

Seth rose from the table.

"Well," he observed, "I've been up all night, too, and it's past my bedtime. As I told you, my assistant's left all of a sudden, and I'm alone in charge of gov'm't property. I ought to turn in, but——" He hesitated.

John Brown also rose.

"Mr. Atkins," he said, "my memory seems to be pretty bad, but I haven't forgotten everything. For instance"—his smile disappeared and his tone became earnest—"I can remember perfectly well that I'm not a crook, that I haven't done anything to be ashamed of—as I see it—that I'm very grateful to you, and that I don't steal. If you care to believe that, and, being neither a sneak nor a thief, that I shan't clear out

with the spoons while you're asleep, you might—well, you might risk turning in."

The light keeper did not answer immediately. The pair looked each other straight in the eye.

Then Seth yawned, and turned toward the bedroom.

"I'll risk it," he said curtly. "If I ain't awake by six o'clock, I wish you'd call me. You'll find some spare clay pipes and tobacco on the mantelpiece by the clock. So long."

He entered the bedroom and closed the door. Mr. Brown stepped over to the mantel and helped himself to a pipe.

CHAPTER III.

At half-past five the light keeper opened the bedroom door, and peeped out. The kitchen was empty. There was no sign of Mr. Brown. It took Seth just four minutes to climb into the garments he had discarded and reach the open air. His guest was seated on the bench beside the house, one of the clay pipes in his hand. He was looking out to sea. He spoke first.

"Hello!" he said. "You're up ahead of time, aren't you? It isn't six yet."

Atkins grinned.

"No," he answered, "'tain't; not quite. But sence Ezry cleared out, I've been a kind of human alarm clock, as you might say. Feelin' all right, are you?"

"Yes, thank you. I say!" Holding up the pipe and regarding it respectfully. "Is this tobacco of yours furnished by the government?"

"No. Some I bought myself last time I was over to the Center. Why, what's the matter with it? Ain't it good?"

"Perhaps so."

"Then what made you ask? Ain't it strong enough?"

"Strong enough! You're disposed to be sarcastic. It's stronger than I am. What do they flavor it with—tar?"

"Say, let's see that plug. That ain't smokin' tobacco."

"What is it, then—asphalt?"

"Why, haw! Haw! haw! That's a piece of Ezry's chewin'. Some he left

when he went away. It's 'Honest Friend.' 'Tis flavored up consider'ble. And you tried to smoke it! Ho! Ho!"

The young man joined in the laugh. "That explains why it bubbled so," he said. "I used twenty-two matches, by actual count, and then gave it up. Bah!" He smacked his lips disgustedly and made a face. "'Honest Friend'—is that the name of it? Meaning that it'll stick to you through life, I presume. Water has no effect on the taste. I've tried it."

"Maybe some supper might help. I'll wash the dinner dishes and start gettin' it. All there seems to be to this job of mine just now is washin' dishes. And how I hate it!"

He reentered the kitchen. Then uttered an exclamation.

"Why, what's become of the dishes?" he demanded. "I left 'em here on the table."

Brown arose from the bench and sauntered to the door.

"I washed them," he said. "I judged that you would have to if I didn't, and it seemed the least I could do, everything considered."

"Sho! You washed the dishes, hey? Where'd you put 'em?"

"In the closet—there. That's where they belong, isn't it?"

Seth went to the closet, took a plate from the pile, and inspected it.

"Um!" he grunted, turning the plate over. "That ain't such a bad job. Not so all-fired bad for a green hand. What did you wash 'em with?"

"A cloth I found hanging by the sink."

"I see. Yes, yes. And you wiped 'em on—what?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, I didn't see any towels in sight, except that one on the door; and, for various reasons, I judged that wasn't a dish towel."

"Good judgment. 'Tisn't. Go on."

"So I hunted around, and in the closet in the parlor, or living room, or whatever you call it, I found a whole stack of things that looked like towels; so I used one of those."

"Is this it?" Seth picked up a damp and bedraggled cloth from the table.

"That's it. I should have hung it up somewhere, I suppose. I'll lose my job if I don't look out."

"Um! Well, I'm much obliged to you, only——"

"Only?"

"Only you washed them dishes with the sink cloth, and wiped 'em with a pillercase."

The volunteer dish washer's mouth opened.

"No!" he gasped.

"Ya-as."

"A pillowcase! Well, by George!"

"Um-hm. I judge you ain't washed many dishes in your lifetime."

"Not so very many. No."

They looked at each other and burst into a roar of laughter. Brown was the first to recover.

"Well," he observed, "I guess it's up to me. If you'll kindly put me next to a genuine cloth, or sponge, or whatever is the proper caper for dish washing, I'll undertake to do them over again. And, for Heaven's sake, lock up the pillowcases."

Seth protested, declaring that the dishes need not be rewashed that very minute, and that when he got a chance he would do them himself. But the young man was firm, and at last the light keeper yielded.

"It's real kind of you," he declared; "and, bein' as I've got consider'ble to do, I don't know but I'll let you. Here's a couple of dish cloths, and there's the towels. I'm goin' out to see to the lights, and I'll be back pretty soon and get supper."

Later in the evening, after supper, the housework done, they sat again on the bench beside the door, each with a pipe, filled, this time, with genuine smoking tobacco. Before and below them was the quiet sea, rolling lazily under the stars. Overhead the big lanterns in the towers thrust their parallel lances of light afar into the darkness. The only sounds were the low wash of the surf and the hum of the eager mosquitoes. Brown was silent, alternately puffing at the pipe and slapping at the insects, which latter, apparently finding his skin easier to puncture than that of the

tanned and leathery Atkins, were making the most of their opportunity.

Seth, whose curiosity had been checked, but not smothered, by his companion's evident desire to say nothing concerning himself, was busy thinking of various guileful schemes with which to entrap the castaway into the disclosure of his identity. Having prepared his bait, he proceeded to get over a line.

"Mr. Brown," he said, "I ain't mentioned it to you afore, 'count of your needin' rest and grub, and all after your fallin' overboard last night. But to-morrow you'll be feelin' fust-rate again, and I cal'late you'll be wantin' to get word to your folks. Now we can telephone to the Eastboro depot, where there's a telegraph, and the depot master'll send a dispatch to your people lettin' 'em know you're all safe and sound. If you'll just give me the address and what you want to say, I'll 'tend to it myself. The depot master's a good friend of mine, and he'll risk sendin' the dispatch 'collect' if I tell him to."

"Thank you," replied Brown shortly.

"Oh, don't mention it. Now, who'll I send it to?"

"You needn't send it. I couldn't think of putting you to further trouble."

"Trouble! 'Tain't no trouble to telephone. Land sakes! I do it four or five times a day. Now, who'll I send it to?"

"You needn't send it."

"Oh, well! Of course, if you'd rather send it yourself——"

"I shan't send it. It really isn't worth while phoning or telegraphing, either. I didn't drown, and I'm very comfortable, thank you—or should be if it weren't for these mosquitoes."

"Comf'table! Yes, you're comf'table, but how about your folks? Won't they learn, soon's that steamer gets into—into Portland—or—or—New York or Boston—or—— Hey?"

"I didn't speak."

Seth swallowed hard, and continued: "Well, wherever she was bound," he snapped. "Won't they learn that you sot sail in her and never got there?"

Then they'll know that you *must* have fell overboard."

John Brown drew a mouthful of smoke through the stem of the pipe and blew it spitefully among the mosquitoes.

"I don't see how they'll learn it," he replied.

"Why, the steamer folks'll wire 'em right off."

"They'll have to find them first."

"That'll be easy enough. There'll be your name, 'John Brown, of such and such a place,' written right on the purser's books, won't it?"

"No," drawled Mr. Brown, "it won't."

The light keeper felt very much as if this particular road to the truth had ended suddenly in a blind alley. He pulled viciously at his chin whiskers. His companion shifted his position on the bench. Silence fell again, as much silence as the mosquitoes would permit.

Suddenly Brown seemed to reach a determination.

"Atkins," he said briskly, and with considerable bitterness in his tone, "don't you worry about my people. They don't know where I am, and—well, some of them, at least, don't care. Maybe I'm a rolling stone—at any rate, I haven't gathered any moss, any financial moss. I'm broke. I haven't any friends; any that I wish to remember. I haven't any job. I am what you might call down and out. If I had drowned when I fell overboard last night, it might have been a good thing—or it might not. We won't argue the question, because just now I'm ready to take either side. But let's talk about yourself. You're light keeper here?"

"I be. Yes."

"And these particular lights seem to be a good way from everywhere and everybody."

"Six mile from Eastboro Center, nine from North Trumet, and two from the nearest life-savin' station. Why?"

"Oh, just for instance. No neighbors, you said?"

"Nary one."

"I noticed a bungalow just across the brook here. It seems to be shut up. Who owns it?"

"Bunga—which? Oh, that cottage over on t'other side the crick? That b'longs to a couple of paintin' fellers from up Boston way. Not house painters, you understand, but fellers that put in their time paintin' pictures of the water, and the beach, and the like of that. Seems a pretty silly job for grown-up men, but they're real pleasant and folksy. Don't put on no airs nor nothin'. They're most gen'rally here every June and July and August, but I understand they ain't comin' this year, so the cottage'll be shut up. I'll miss 'em, kind of. One of 'em's name's Graham, and t'other's Hamilton."

"I see. Many visitors to the lights?"

"Not many. Once in a while a picnic comes over in a livery four-seater, but not often. The same gang never comes twice. Road's too bad, and they complain like fury about the moskeeters."

"Do they? How peevish! Atkins, you're not married?"

"Me? *Married!* Do I look like a dum fool?"

The light keeper bounced on the bench as if some one had kicked the latter violently from beneath. He snorted in his indignation. Brown hastened to apologize.

"Beg pardon," he said solemnly. "I should have known. Now just one more question: This assistant of yours—what did he have to do when he was here?"

"Waal," drawled Atkins, with sarcasm, "he was *supposed* to do considerable many things. Stand watch and watch with me, and scrub brass, and clean up around, and sweep, and wash dishes, and—and—well, make himself gen'rally useful. Them was the duties he was supposed to have. What he *done* was diff'rent. Pesky loafer!"

"Um—h'm. I understand. Have they appointed his successor yet? Have you got any one to take his place?"

"No. Fact is, I'd ought to have telegraphed right off to the board, but I ain't. I was so glad to see the last of him that I kept puttin' it off. I'll do it to-morrer."

"Perhaps you won't need to."

"'Course I'll need to! Why not?"

Got to have somebody to help. That's rules and regulations; and, besides, I can't keep awake day and night, too. What makes you think I won't need to?"

The young man knocked the ashes from his pipe. Rising, he laid a hand on his companion's shoulder.

"Because you've got an assistant right here on the premises," he said. "Delivered by the Atlantic Express right at your door. Far be it from me to toot my horn, Mr. Atkins, or to proclaim my merits from the housetops. But, speaking as one discerning person to another, when it comes to an A-one, first-chop light keeper's assistant, I ask: 'What's the matter with yours truly, John Brown?'"

Seth's reply was not in words. The hand holding his pipe fell limp upon his lap, and he stared at the speaker. The latter, entirely unabashed, waved an airy gesture, and continued.

"I repeat," he said, "'What's the matter with John Brown?' And echo answers: 'He's all right!' I am a candidate for the position of assistant keeper at Eastboro Twin Lights."

"*You?*"

"Me."

"But—but— Aw, go on! You're foolin'."

"Not a fool. I mean it. I am here. I'm green, but in the sunshine of your experience I agree to ripen rapidly. I can wash dishes—you've seen me. I *believe* I could rub brass and sweep."

"You wantin' to be assistant at a place like this! *You!* An edicated, able young chap, that's been used to valets, and servants, and—"

"Why do you say that? How do you know I've been used to those things?"

"'Cause, as I hinted to you a spell ago, I ain't altogether a dum fool. I can put two and two together and make four without having the example done for me on a blackboard. You're a rich man's son; you've been used to sassiety, and city ways, and good clothes. *You* wantin' to put in your days and nights in a forsaken hole like this! Nonsense! Get out!"

But Mr. Brown refused to get out.

"No nonsense about it," he declared. "It is the hand of Fate. With the whole broadside of Cape Cod to land upon, why was I washed ashore just at this particular spot? Answer, because at this spot, at this time, Eastboro Twin Lights needed an assistant keeper. I like the spot. It is beautiful. 'Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife.' With your permission, I'll stay here. The leopard may or may not change his spots, but I shan't. I like this one, and here I stay. Any brass to be scrubbed, Mr. Atkins? Or shall I say 'Captain Atkins'?"

CHAPTER IV.

Of course, had Eastboro Twin Lights been an important station, the possibility of John Brown's remaining there would have been non-existent. If it had been winter, or even early spring or fall, a regular assistant would have been appointed at once, and the cast-away given his walking papers. If Seth Atkins had not been Seth Atkins, particular friend of the district superintendent, matters might have been different.

But the Eastboro Lights were unimportant; merely a halfway mark between Orham on the one hand and the powerful Seaboard Heights' beacon on the other. It was the beginning of summer, when wrecks almost never occurred. And the superintendent liked Seth, and Seth liked him. So, although Mr. Atkins still scoffed at his guest's becoming a permanent fixture at the lights, and merely consented, after long parley, to see if he couldn't arrange for him to "hang around and help a spell until somebody else was sent," the conversation with the superintendent over the long-distance phone resulted more favorably for Brown than that nonchalant young gentleman had a reasonable right to expect.

"The Lord knows who I can send you now, Atkins!" said the superintendent. "I can't think of a man anywhere that can be spared. If you can get on for a day or two longer, I'll try to get a helper down; but where he's coming from I don't see."

Then Seth sprang the news that he had a "sort of helper" already.

"He's a likely young chap enough," admitted the light keeper, whispering the words into the transmitter, in order that the "likely young chap" might not hear; "but he's purty green yet. He wants the reg'lar job, and, give me time enough, I cal'late I can break him in. Yes, I'm pretty sure I can. And it's the off season, so there really ain't no danger. In a month he'd be doin' fust rate."

"Who is he? Where did he come from?" asked the superintendent.

"Name's Brown. He comes from— from off here aways," was the strictly truthful answer. "He used to be on a steamboat."

"All right. If you'll take a share of the responsibility, I'll take the rest. And, as soon as I can, I'll send you a regular man."

"I can't pay you no steady wages," Seth explained to his new helper. "Salaries come from the gov'ment, and, until they say so, I ain't got no right to do it. And I can't let you monkey with the lights, except to clean up around and such. If you want to stay a spell, until an assistant's app'nted, I'll undertake to be responsible for your keep. And if you need some new shoes or stockin's or a cap, or the like of that, I'll see you get 'em. Further'n that, I can't go— yet. It's a pretty poor job for a feller like you, and if I *was* you, I wouldn't take it."

"Oh, yes, you would," replied Brown, with conviction. "If you were I, you would take it with bells on. Others may yearn for the strenuous life, but not your humble servant. As for me, I stay here and clean up around."

And stay he did, performing the cleaning up and other duties with success and a zeal unexpected. Atkins, for the first day or two, watched him intently, having a feeling that, after all, perhaps he had been too "soft" and trustful on such short acquaintance, and that he might wake up from one of his naps to find the substitute assistant and the teaspoons missing. But nothing of this kind happened. Day after day went

by, and the light keeper's judgment of human nature—a quality on which he prided himself—gained confirmation steadily. "John Brown" at the end of his first week at the lights was the same cool, easy-going, cheerful, and likable individual that Seth had found asleep on the beach.

Also, though quite as mysterious as ever, and secretive concerning his own personal affairs, his bearing and manner were always what the light keeper considered those of a gentleman—the kind of gentleman who did not "put on airs." Not that he had anything to put on airs about; but, then, neither had most of the inflated summer boarders at the hotel in the village.

Atkins grew to like him, and he, apparently, liked Seth. Companionship in a lonely spot like Eastboro Twin Lights is a test of a man's temper. Brown stood the test well. If he made mistakes in the work—and he did make some ridiculous ones—he cheerfully undid them when they were pointed out to him. He was, for the most part, good-natured and willing to talk, though there were periods when he seemed depressed, and wandered off by himself along the beach or sat by the edge of the bluff, staring out to sea.

As has been said, Seth liked him. And one day occurred a series of happenings which, bidding fair at first to end in a row the relationship between the two, instead revealed a trait of character in the assistant which, more than anything else could have done, made the latter "solid" with his superior.

At a little before ten on this particular morning, Brown, busy in the kitchen, heard vigorous language outside. It was Atkins who was speaking, and the assistant wondered who on earth he could be talking to. A glance around the doorpost showed that he was, apparently, talking to himself—at least there was no other human being to be seen. He held in his hand a battered pair of marine glasses, and occasionally he peered through them. Each time he did so, his soliloquy became more animated and profane.

"What's the matter?" demanded Brown, emerging from the house.

"Matter?" repeated Seth. "Matter enough! Here! Take a squint through them glasses, and tell me who's in that buggy comin' yonder?"

The buggy, a black dot far down the sandy road leading from the village, was rocking and dipping over the dunes. The assistant took the glasses, adjusted them, and looked as directed.

"Why," he said slowly, "there are three people in that buggy. A man—and——"

"And two women. That's what I thought. Dum idiots comin' over to picnic and spend the day, sure's taxes. And they'll want to be showed round the lights and everywhere, and they'll ask more'n forty million questions. Consarn the luck!"

Brown looked troubled. His sole reason for liking Eastboro Twin Lights had been that no one ever came there. Now three some ones were coming. He had no desire to meet strangers.

"How do you know they're coming here?" he asked.

The answer was conclusive.

"Because," snarled Seth, "there ain't no other place round here they *could* come to, is there?"

A moment later he added: "Well, you'll have to show 'em round."

"I will?"

"Sartin. That's part of the assistant keeper's job."

He chuckled as he said it. That chuckle grated on the young man's nerves.

"I'm not the assistant," he declared cheerfully.

"You ain't? What are you, then?"

"Oh, just a helper. I don't get any wages. You told me yourself, only yesterday, that I had no regular standing here. And, according to the government rules, those you've got posted in the kitchen, the light keeper is obliged to show visitors about. I wouldn't break the rules for the world. Good morning. Think I'll go down to the beach."

He stalked away, whistling. Atkins, his face flaming, roared after him a

profane opinion concerning his actions. Then he went into the kitchen, slamming the door with a bang.

Some twenty minutes later the "helper" heard his name shouted from the top of the bluff.

"Mr. Brown! I say! Ahoy, there, Mr. Brown! Come up here a minute, won't ye?"

Brown clambered up the path. A little man, with gray throat whiskers and wearing an antiquated straw hat, the edge of the brim trimmed with black braid, was standing waiting for him.

"Sorry to trouble you, Mr. Brown," stammered the little man; "but you be Mr. Brown, ain't you?"

"I am. Yes."

"Well, I cal'lated you was. My name's Stover, Abijah Stover. I live over to Trumet. Me and my wife drove over for a sort of picnic like. We've got her cousin, Mrs. Sophia Hains, along. Sophi's a widow from Boston, and she ain't never seen a light-house afore. I know Seth Atkins slightly, and I was cal'latin' he'd show us around; but, bein' as he's so sick——"

"Sick! Is Atkins sick?"

"I should say he was. He's in the bedroom there groanin' somethin' terrible. He told me not to say nothin' to the womenfolks, but to hail you, and you'd look out for us. Didn't you know he was laid up? Why, he——"

Brown did not wait to hear more. He strode to the house with Mr. Stover at his heels. On his way he caught a glimpse of a buggy, the horse dozing between the shafts. On the seat of the buggy were two women, one plump and round-faced, the other thin and gaunt.

Mr. Stover panted behind him.

"Say, Mr. Brown," he whispered as they entered the kitchen, "don't tell my wife nor Sophi about Seth's bein' sick. Better not say a word to them about it."

The tone in which this was spoken made the assistant curious.

"Why not?" he asked.

"Cause—well, 'cause Hannah's hobby is sick folks, as you might say. If there's a cat in the neighborhood that's

ailin', she's always dosin' of it up, and fixin' medicine for it, and the like of that. And Sophi's one of them 'New Thinkers', and don't believe anybody's got any right to be sick. The two of 'em ain't done nothin' but argue and row over diseases, and imagination, and medicines ever since Sophi got here. If they knew Seth was laid up, I honestly believe they'd drop picnic and everythin', and start fightin' over whether he was really sick or just thought he was. And I sort of figgered upon havin' a quiet day off."

Brown found the light keeper stretched on the bed in his room. He was dressed, with the exception of coat and boots, and when the young man entered he groaned feebly.

"What's the matter?" demanded the alarmed helper.

"Oh, my!" groaned Seth. "Oh, my!"

"Are you in pain? What is it? Shall I phone for the doctor?"

"No, no. No use gettin' the doctor. I'll be all right by and by. It's one of my attacks. I have 'em every once in a while. Just let me alone, and let me lay here without bein' disturbed; then I'll get better, I guess."

"But it's so sudden!"

"I know. They always come on that way. Now run along like a good feller and leave me to my suffrin's. O-oh, dear!"

Much troubled, Brown turned to the door. As he was going out he happened to look back. The dresser stood against the wall beyond the bed, and in its mirror he caught a glimpse of the face of the sick man. On that face, which should have been distorted with agony, was a broad grin.

Brown found the little Stover man waiting for him in the kitchen.

"Be you ready?" he asked.

"Ready?" repeated Brown absently. "Ready for what?"

"Why, to show us round the lights. Sophi, she ain't never seen one afore. Atkins said that, bein' as he wasn't able to leave his bed, you'd show us around."

"He did, hey?"

"Yes. He said you'd be glad to."

"Hum!" Mr. Brown's tone was that

of one upon whom, out of darkness, a light has suddenly burst. "I see," he mused thoughtfully. "Yes, yes. I see."

For a minute he stood still, evidently pondering. Then, with a twinkle in his eye, he strode out of the house and walked briskly across to the buggy.

"Good morning, ladies," he said, removing the new cap which Seth had recently purchased for him in Eastboro. "Mr. Stover tells me you wish to be shown the lights."

The plump woman answered.

"Yes," she said briskly, "we do. Are you a new keeper? Where's Mr. Atkins?"

"Mr. Atkins, I regret to say," began Brown, "is ill. He——"

Stover, standing at his elbow, interrupted nervously.

"Mr. Brown here'll show us around," he said quickly. "Seth said he would."

"I shall be happy," concurred that young gentleman. "You must excuse me if I seem rather worried. Mr. Atkins, my chief—I believe you know him, Mrs. Stover—has been taken suddenly ill, and is, apparently, suffering much pain. The attack was very sudden, and I——"

"Sick?" The plump woman seemed actually to prick up her ears, like a sleepy cat at the sound of the dinner bell. "Is Seth sick? And you all alone with him here? Can't I do anything to help?"

"All he wants is to be left alone," put in her husband anxiously. "He said so himself."

"Do you know what's the matter? Have you got any medicine for him?"

Mrs. Stover was already climbing out of the buggy.

"No," replied Brown. "I haven't. That is, I haven't given him any yet."

The slim woman, Mrs. Hains, of Boston, now broke into the conversation.

"Good thing!" she snapped. "Most medicine's nothing but opium and alcohol. Fill the poor creature full of drugs and——"

"I s'pose you'd set and preach New Thought at him!" snapped Mrs. Stover. "As if a body could be cured by hot air! I believe I'll go right in and see

him. Don't you s'pose I could help, Mr. Brown?"

Mr. Brown seemed pleased, but reluctant.

"It's awfully good of you," he said. "I couldn't think of troubling you when you've come so far on a pleasure excursion. But I *am* at my wit's end."

"Don't say another word!" Mrs. Stover's bulky figure was already on the way to the door of the house. "I'm only too glad to do what I can. And, if I do say that shouldn't, I'm always real handy in a sick room. 'Bijah, be quiet. I don't care if we *are* on a picnic; no human bein' shall suffer while I set around and do nothin'."

Mrs. Hains was at her cousin's heels.

"You'll worry him to death," she declared. "You'll tell him how sick he is, and that he's goin' to die, and such stuff. What he needs is cheerful conversation and mental uplift. It's too bad! Well, you shan't have your own way with him, anyhow. Mr. Brown, where is he?"

"You two goin' to march right into his *bedroom*?" screamed the irate Abijah.

The women answered not. They were already in the kitchen. Brown hastened after them.

"It's all right, ladies," he said. "Right this way, please."

He led the way to the chamber of the sick man. Mr. Atkins turned on his bed of pain, caught a glimpse of the visitors, and sat up.

"What in time?" he roared.

"Seth," said Brown benignly, "this is Mrs. Stover, of Eastboro. I think you know her. And Mrs. Hains, of Boston. These ladies have heard of your sickness, and, having had experience in such cases, have kindly offered to stay with you and help in any way they can. Mrs. Stover, I will leave him in your hands. Please call me if I can be of any assistance."

Without waiting for further comment from the patient, whose face was a picture, he hastened to the kitchen, choking as he went. Mr. Stover met him at the outer door.

"Now you've done it!" wailed the lit-

tle man. "Now you've done it! Didn't I tell you! Oh, this'll be a hell of a picnic!"

He stalked away, righteous indignation overcoming him. Brown sat down in a rocking-chair and shook with emotion. From the direction of the sick room came the sounds of three voices, each trying to outshout the other. The substitute assistant listened to this for a while; then, as a new thought struck him, he crossed to the pantry, found an empty bottle, rinsed it at the sink, stepped again to the pantry, and, entering it, closed the door behind him. There he busied himself with the molasses jug, the soft-soap bucket, the oil can, the pepper shaker, and a few other utensils and their contents. Footsteps in the kitchen caused him to hurriedly reënter that apartment. Mrs. Stover was standing by the range, her face red.

"Oh, there you are, Mr. Brown!" she exclaimed. "I wondered where you'd gone to."

"How is he?" inquired Brown, the keenest anxiety in his utterance.

"H'm! He'd do well enough if he had the right treatment. I callate he's better now, even as 'tis; but when a person has to lay and hear over and over again that what ails 'em is nothin' but imagination, it ain't to be wondered at that they get mad. What he needs is some sort of soothin' medicine; and I only wish 'twasn't so fur over to home. I've got just what he needs there."

"I was thinking—" began Brown.

"What was you thinkin'?"

"I was wondering if some of my 'Stomach Balm' wouldn't help him. It's an old family receipt, handed down from the Indians, I believe. I always have a bottle with me, and— Still, I wouldn't wish to prescribe, not knowing the disease."

Mrs. Stover's eyes sparkled. Patent medicines were her hobby.

"Hum!" she said. "'Stomach Balm' sounds good; and he says his trouble is principally stomach. Some of them Indian medicines are mighty powerful. Have you—did you say you had a bottle with you, Mr. Brown?"

The young man went again to the

pantry, and returned with the bottle he had so recently found there. Now, however, it was two-thirds full of a black, sticky mixture. Mrs. Stover removed the cork, and took an investigating sniff.

"It smells powerful," she said hopefully.

"It is. Would you like to taste it?" handing her a tablespoon.

He watched as she swallowed a spoonful.

"Ugh! Oh!" she gasped; even her long-suffering palate rebelled at *that* taste. "It—I should think that *ought* to help him."

"I should think so. It may be the very thing he needs. At any rate, it can't hurt him. It's quite harmless."

Mrs. Stover's face was still twisted under the influence of the "Balm"; but her mind was made up.

"I'm goin' to try it," she declared. "I don't care if every New Thoughter in creation says no. He needs medicine, and needs it right away."

"The dose," said Mr. Brown gravely, "is two tablepoonsful every fifteen minutes. I do hope it will help him. Give him my sympathy—my deepest sympathy, Mrs. Stover, please."

The plump lady disappeared in the direction of the sick room. The light keeper's assistant lingered, and listened. He heard a shrill powwow of feminine voices. Evidently "New Thought" and the practice of medicine had once more clashed. The argument waxed and waned. Followed the click of a spoon against glass. And then came a gasp, a gurgle, a choking yell; and high upon the salty air, enveloping Eastboro Twin Lights, rose the voice of Mr. Seth Atkins, expressing his opinion of the "Stomach Balm," and those who administered it.

John Brown darted out of the kitchen, dodged around the corner of the house, tiptoed past the bench by the bluff, where Mr. Stover sat gloomily meditating, and ran lightly down the path to the creek and the wharf. The boathouse at the end of the wharf offered a convenient refuge. Into the building he darted, closed the door be-

hind him, and collapsed upon a heap of fish nets.

At three-thirty that afternoon, Mr. Atkins, apparently quite recovered, was sitting in the kitchen rocker, reading a last week's newspaper, one of a number procured on his most recent trip to the village. The Stovers and their guest had departed. Their buggy was out of sight beyond the dunes. A slight noise startled the light keeper, and he looked up. His helper was standing in the doorway, upon his face an expression of intense and delightful surprise.

"What?" exclaimed Mr. Brown. "What? Is it really you?"

Seth put down the paper and nodded.

"Um-hm!" he observed dryly. "It's really me."

"Up? And *well*?" queried Brown.

"Um-hm! Pretty well, considerin', thank you. Been for a stroll up Washin'ton Street, have you? Or a little walk on the Common, maybe?"

The elaborate sarcasm of these questions was intended to be withering. Mr. Brown, however, did not wither. Neither did he blush.

"I have been," he said, "down at the boathouse. I knew you were in safe hands and well looked after, so I went away. I couldn't remain here and hear you suffer."

"Hum! *Hear* me suffer, hey? Much obliged, I'm sure. What have you been doin' there all this time? I hoped you was—that is, I began to be afraid you was dead. Thought your sympathy for me had been too much for you, maybe."

Brown mournfully shook his head. "It was—almost," he said solemnly. "I think I dropped asleep. I was quite overcome."

"Hum! Better take a dose of that 'Stomach Balm,' hadn't you? That'll liven you up, I'll guarantee."

"No, thank you. The sight of you, well and strong again, is all the medicine I need. We must keep the 'Balm' in case you have another attack. By the way, I notice the dinner dishes haven't been washed. I'll do them at once. I know you must be tired after your illness—and the exertion of showing your guests about the lights."

Atkins did not answer, although he seemed to want to very much. However, he made no objection when his helper, rolling up his sleeves, turned to the sink and the dish washing.

Seth was silent all the rest of the afternoon and during supper. But that evening as Brown sat smoking, as usual, on the bench outside, Atkins joined him.

"Hello!" said Seth, as cheerfully as if nothing had happened.

"Hello!" replied the assistant shortly. He had been thinking, and his thoughts were not altogether pleasant.

"I s'pose you think," began Atkins, "that maybe I've got a grudge against you on account of this mornin', and that 'Balm,' and such. I ain't."

"That's good. I'm glad to hear it."

"Yes. After the fust dose of that stuff—for thunder sakes *what* did you put in it?—I was about ready to murder you; but I've got over that. I don't blame you for gettin' even. We *are* even, you know."

"I'm satisfied, if you are."

"I be. But what I don't understand is why you didn't want to show them women around."

"Oh, I don't know. Because they were women, I guess. Why didn't you want to do it yourself?"

Seth crossed his legs and smoked in silence for a moment or two. Then, by way of reply, he said slowly:

"I s'pose you wonder sometimes what makes me stay on a job like this, in a forsaken hole like this—an able man like me. Well, young feller, I've been here goin' on six year now, and I come here *because* 'twas forsaken. There wa'n't no females here—that's why I come."

If he expected an answer to this he was disappointed. Brown smoked, but said nothing. After a little, the light keeper continued:

"I've been an old bach all my life," he said, "but eight years ago I was fool enough to think I'd get married. There was a woman over to Hyannis that I'd have done anything for—yes, sir, anything! She was a widder woman and good-lookin', and—and—well, she had

a way with her. I was fishin' and lobsterin' then, and takin' out sailin' parties and such, and makin' money. And she and me was goin' to be married. I thought more of Emeline—that was her name—than—oh, well, what's the use? Anyhow, when I found out *she* couldn't be trusted, why, I says: 'That's enough for *me*.' And 'twas, too!"

He stopped short.

"I see," said Brown absently.

"See! 'Course you see! And I'll leave it to anybody if I didn't have just cause and reason. Why, I found a letter in her own handwritin', a letter to another man, askin' him to come and see her, and be sure and not let me know. *Me*, mind you! And when I taxed her with it, havin' the letter right in my hand, she had the impudence to tell me I had no right to read her letters, and if I couldn't trust her better'n that I'd better clear out. So I did. I cleared out of Hyannis, and I've never been back there since. I've never told a soul but you the real reason, though there's been guesses enough. I went fishin' up to the Banks fust off. There wa'n't no *women* there! Then I got this place offered me. I'd been a light keeper when I was younger, and I knew the ropes. I come here as assistant fust, liked it, and here I've stayed. And why do I stay? Because there's scarcely ever a woman around. *Now* you see why I expect you to do the polite to them that do come. I'll forgive you for to-day's doin's; but after this you must understand showin' the lights to females is your job."

He rose, evidently considering the affair settled. Brown stroked his chin.

"I'm sorry, Atkins," he observed slowly; "but, as they used to say in some play or other: 'I guess you'll have to hire another boy.'"

"What? What do you mean?"

"I mean that you're not the only woman hater on the beach."

"Hey? Has a woman given you the go by?"

"No. The other way around, if anything. Look here, Atkins! I'm not in the habit of discussing my private affairs with acquaintances; but—well,

hang it! I've got to talk to somebody. At least, I feel that way just now. Let's suppose a case. Suppose you were a young fellow not long out of college—a young fellow whose mother was dead, and whose dad was rich, and head over heels in money-making, and with the idea that his will was no more to be disputed than a law of the Almighty. Just suppose that, will you?"

"Huh! Well, 'twill be hard supposin', but I'll try. Heave ahead."

"Suppose that you'd never been used to working or supporting yourself. Had a position, a nominal one, in your dad's office, but absolutely no responsibility, all the money you wanted, and so on. Suppose because your father wanted you to—and *her* people felt the same—you had become engaged to a girl, a nice enough girl, too, in her way. But, then, suppose that little by little you came to realize that her way wasn't yours. You and she liked each other well enough, but the whole thing was a family arrangement, a money arrangement, a perfectly respectable, buy-and-sell affair. That and nothing else. And the more you thought about it, the surer you felt that it was so. But when you told your governor, he got on his ear and sailed into you, and you sailed back, until finally he swore that you should either marry that girl or he'd throw you out of his house and office to root for yourself. What would you do?"

"Hey? Land sakes! I don't know. I always had to root, so I ain't a competent judge. Go on, you've got me interested."

"Well, I said I'd root, that's all. But I didn't have the nerve to go and tell the girl. The engagement had been announced, and all that, and I knew what a mess it would make for her. I sat in my room, among the things I was packing in my grip to take with me, and thought and thought. If I went to her there would be a scene. If I said I had been disinherited, she would want to know why—naturally. I had quarreled with the governor—yes, but why? Then I should have to tell her the real reason. I didn't want to marry her or anybody else on such a bargain-counter basis.

That seemed such a rotten thing to say; and she might ask why it had taken me such a long time to find it out. No, I just *couldn't* tell her that. So, after my think was over, I wrote her a note saying that my father and I had had a disagreement, and he had chucked me out, or words to that effect. Naturally, under the circumstances, marriage was out of the question, and I released her from the engagement. Good-by and good luck—or something similar. I mailed the letter, and left the town the next morning."

He paused. The light keeper made no comment. After a moment, the young man continued.

"I landed in Boston," he said, "full of conceit and high-minded ideas of working my own way up the ladder. But, in order to work up, you've got to get at least a hand-hold on the bottom rung. I couldn't get it. Nobody wanted a genteel loafer, which was me. My money gave out. I bought a steamboat passage to another city, but I didn't have enough left to buy a square meal. Then, by bull luck, I fell overboard and landed here. And here I found the solution. I'm dead. If the governor gets soft-hearted, and gets private detectives on my trail, they'll find I disappeared from that steamer, that's all. Drowned, of course. *She'll* think so, too. 'Good riddance to bad rubbish' is the general verdict. I can stay here a year or so, and then, being dead and forgotten, can go back to civilization and hustle for myself. *But* a woman is at the bottom of my trouble, and I never want to see another. So, if my staying here depends upon my seeing them, I guess, as I say: 'You'll have to hire another boy.'"

He, too, rose. Seth laid a big hand on his shoulder.

"Son," said the light keeper, "I'm sorry for you. I cal'late I know how you feel. I like you fust-rate, and, if it's a possible thing, I'll fix it so's you can stay right here long's you want to. As for the womenfolks that do come—why, we'll dodge 'em if we can, and share responsibility if we must. But there's one thing you've got to understand: You're young, and maybe your

woman hate'll wear off. If it does, out you go. I can't have any sparkin' or love-makin' around these premises."

The assistant snorted contemptuously.

"If ever you catch me being even coldly familiar with a female of any age," he declared, "I hereby request that you hit me, politely but firmly, with that ax," pointing to the kindly hatchet leaning against the doorpost.

Seth chuckled.

"Good stuff!" he exclaimed. "And, for my part, if ever you catch me gettin' confectionery with a woman, I—well, don't stop to pray over me; just down me, that's all I ask. It's a bargain. Shake!"

So they shook with great solemnity.

CHAPTER V.

After this ceremony and mutual exchange of confidences, to which, by the way, neither alluded after that evening, the odd friendship between the light keeper and his companion deepened. Affairs at the lights settled down into a daily routine, in which each played his part. No regular assistant was appointed or seemed likely to be, for the summer, at least. Seth and his friend, the superintendent, held another lengthy conversation over the wire; and, while Brown's uncertain status remained the same, there was a tacit understanding that, by the first of September, if the young man was sufficiently "broken in," the position vacated by Ezra Payne should be his.

Atkins trusted him more and more, even to the extent of leaving him in charge during the major part of the day, while he, Seth, slept. He was not allowed to stand watch at night, of course; that would come later, when he became a duly recognized employee of the government.

June crawled by, and July came. The monotony was seldom broken. Occasionally Atkins harnessed the old horse and drove to Eastboro, returning with a batch of newspapers and the mail. Brown might have made these trips, but he did not care to. Solitude and seclusion were what he most desired, and

there were more of these than anything else at the Twin Lights.

One morning, in the middle of the month, the helper, his dish washing and sweeping done, was busy in the light room, at the top of the right-hand tower, polishing the brass of the lantern. The curtains were drawn on the landward side, and those toward the sea open. Seth, having finished his night watching and breakfast, was audibly asleep in the house. Brown rubbed and polished leisurely, his thoughts far away and a frown on his face. For the thousandth time that week he decided that he was a loafer and a vagabond, and that it would have been much better for himself and creation generally if he had never risen after the plunge over the steamer's rail.

He pulled the cloth cover over the glittering lantern and descended the iron stair to the ground floor. When he emerged into the open air, he heard a sound which made him start and listen. The sound was the distant rattle of wheels from the direction of the village. Was another "picnic" coming?

He walked briskly to the corner of the house, and peered down the winding road. A carriage was in sight, certainly, but it was going, not coming. Some one was driving to the village. But where had he been, and who was he? Not Seth, for Seth was asleep—he could hear him.

The driver of the carriage, whoever he was, had not visited the lights. And, as Atkins had said, there was nowhere else to go on that road. Brown, puzzled, looked about him; at the sea, the lights, the house, the creek, the cove, the bluff on the other side of the cove, the bungalow—Ah! The bungalow!

For the door of the bungalow was open, and one or two of the shutters were down. The carriage had brought some person or persons to the bungalow, and left them there. Instantly, of course, Brown thought of the artists from Boston. Probably they had changed their minds, and decided to summer at Eastboro, after all. His frown deepened. He did not wish to meet city people.

Then, from across the cove, from the bungalow, came a shrill scream, a feminine scream. The assistant started, scarcely believing his ears. Before he could gather his wits, a stout woman, with a checked apron in her hand, rushed out of the bungalow door, looked about, saw him, and waved the apron like a flag.

"Hi!" she screamed. "Hi, you! Mr. Lighthouseman! Come quick! Do please come here quick and help us!"

There was but one thing to do, and Brown did it instinctively. He raced through the beach grass, down the hill, in obedience to the call. As he ran, he wondered who on earth the stout woman could be. Seth had said that the artists did their own housekeeping.

"Hurry up!" shrieked the stout woman, dancing an elephantine fandango in front of the bungalow. "Come on!"

To run around the shore line of the cove would have taken a good deal of time. However, had the tide been at flood, there would have been no other way—excepting by boat—to reach the cottage. But the tide was out, and the narrowest portion of the creek, the stream connecting the cove with the ocean, was but knee-deep. Through the water splashed the assistant, and clambered up the bank beyond.

"Quick!" screamed the woman. "They'll eat us alive!"

"Who? What?" panted Brown.

"Wasps! They're in there! The room's full of 'em. If there's one thing on earth I'm scared of, it's— Don't stop to talk! Go in!"

She indicated the door of a room adjoining the living room of the little cottage. From behind the door came sounds of upsetting furniture and sharp slaps. Evidently the artists were having a lively time. But they must be curious chaps to be afraid of wasps. Brown opened the door and entered, partly of his own volition, partly because he was pushed by the stout woman. Then he gasped in astonishment.

The wasps were there, dozens of them, and they had built a nest in the upper corner of the room. But they

were not the astonishing part of the picture. A young woman was there, also; a young woman with dark hair and eyes, the sleeves of a white shirt waist rolled above her elbows, and a wet towel in her right hand. She was skipping lightly about the room, slapping frantically at the humming insects.

"Emeline," she panted, "don't stand there screaming. Get another towel and——"

Then she turned, and saw Brown. For an instant she, too, seemed astonished. But only for an instant.

"Oh, I'm so glad you came!" she exclaimed. "Here! Take this! You must hit quick and hard."

"This" was the towel. The assistant took it mechanically. The young lady did not wait to give further orders. She rushed out of the room and shut the door. Brown was alone with the wasps, and they were lively company. When, at last, the battle was over, the last wasp was dead, the nest was a crumpled gray heap over in the corner, and the assistant's brow was ornamented with four red and smarting punctures, which promised to shortly become picturesque and painful lumps. Rubbing these absently with one hand, and bearing the towel in the other, he opened the door and stepped out into the adjoining room.

The two women were awaiting him. He found them standing directly in front of him as he emerged.

"Have you—have you killed them?" begged the younger of the pair.

"Be they all dead?" demanded the other.

Brown nodded solemnly.

"I guess so," he said. "They seem to be."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" cried the dark-haired girl. "I'm—we—are so much obliged to you."

"If there's any critters on earth," declared the stout woman, "that I can't stand, it's wasps and hornets and such. Mice I don't mind——"

"I do," interrupted her companion, with emphasis.

"But when I walked into that room and seen that nest in the corner, I was

pretty nigh knocked over. And," she added, "it takes consider'ble to do that to me."

The assistant looked at her.

"Yes," he said absently, "I should think it might. That is, I mean—I—I—I beg your pardon."

He paused, and wiped his forehead with the towel. The young lady burst into a peal of laughter, in which the stout woman joined. The laugh was so infectious that even Brown was obliged to smile.

"I apologize," he stammered. "I didn't mean that exactly as it sounded. I'm not responsible mentally—yet—I guess."

"I don't wonder." It was the stout woman who answered. The girl had turned away and was looking out the window; her shoulders shook. "I shouldn't think you would be. Hauled in bodily, as you might say, and shut up in a room to fight wasps! And by folks you never saw afore, and don't know from Adam! You needn't apologize. I'd forgive you if you said somethin' a good deal worse'n that. I'm long past the age where I'm sensitive about my weight, thank goodness."

"And we *are* ever so much obliged to you." The girl was facing him once more, and she was serious, though the corners of her mouth still twitched. "The whole affair is perfectly ridiculous," she said, "but Emeline was frightened, and so was I—when I had time to realize it. Thank you again."

"You're quite welcome, I'm sure. No trouble at all."

The assistant turned to go. His brain was beginning to regain a little of its normal poise, and he was dimly conscious that he had been absent from duty quite long enough.

"Maybe you'd like to know who 'tis you've helped," observed the stout woman. "And, considerin' that we're likely to be next-door neighbors for a spell, I cal'late introductions are the proper thing. My name's Bascom. I'm housekeeper for Miss Graham. This is Miss Graham."

The young lady offered a hand. Brown took it.

"Graham?" he repeated. "Where?" Then, remembering a portion of what Seth had told him, he added: "I see! The—the artist?"

"My brother is an artist. He and his friend, Mr. Hamilton, own this bungalow. They are abroad this summer, and I am going to camp here for a few weeks—Mrs. Bascom and I. I paint a little, too, but only for fun."

Brown murmured a conventionality concerning his delight at meeting the pair, and once more headed for the door. But Mrs. Bascom's curiosity would not permit him to escape so easily.

"I thought," she said, "when I see you standin' over there by the lights that you must be one of the keepers. Not the head keeper—I knew you wa'n't him—but an assistant, maybe. But I guess you're only a visitor, Mister—Mister——"

"Brown."

"Yes, Mr. Brown. I guess you ain't keeper, are you?"

"I am the assistant keeper at present. Yes."

"You don't say!" Mrs. Bascom looked surprised. So, too, did Miss Graham.

"You don't look like a lighthouse keeper," continued the former. "Oh, I don't mean your clothes!" noticing the young man's embarrassed glance at his wet and far from immaculate garments. "I mean the way you talk and act. You ain't been here long, have you?"

"No."

"Just come this summer?"

"Yes."

"I thought so. You ain't a Cape Codder?"

"No."

"I was sure you wa'n't. Where *do* you come from?"

Brown hesitated. Miss Graham, noticing his hesitation, hastened to end the inquisition.

"Mr. Brown can't stop to answer questions, Emeline," she said. "I'm sure he wants to get back to his work. Good morning, Mr. Brown. No doubt we shall see each other often, being the only neighbors in sight. Call again—do. I

solemnly promise that you shall have to fight no more wasps."

"Say!" Mrs. Bascom took a step forward. "Speakin' of wasps—stand still a minute, Mr. Brown, won't you? What's them lumps on your forehead? Why, I do believe you've been bit. You have, sure and sartin!"

Miss Graham was very much concerned.

"Oh, no!" she exclaimed. "I hope not. Let me see."

"No, indeed!" The assistant was on the step by this time, and moving rapidly. "Nothing at all. No consequence. Good morning."

He almost ran down the hill, and crossed the creek at the wading place. As he splashed through, the voice of Mrs. Bascom reached his ears.

"Cold mud's the best thing," she screamed. "Put it on thick. It takes out the smart. Good and thick, mind!"

For the next hour or two the light keeper's helper moved about his household tasks in a curious frame of mind. He was thoroughly angry—or thought he was—and very much disturbed. Neighbors of any kind were likely to be a confounded nuisance, but two women! Heavens! And the stout woman was sure to be running in for calls, and to borrow things. As for the other, she seemed a nice girl enough, but he never wanted to see another girl, nice or otherwise. Her eyes were pretty, so was her hair, but what of it? Oh, hang the luck! Just here he banged his swollen forehead on the sharp edge of the door, and found relief in profanity.

Seth Atkins was profane also when he heard the news. Brown said nothing until his superior discovered, with his own eyes, that the bungalow was open. Then, in answer to the light keeper's questions, came the disclosure of the truth.

"Women!" roared Seth. "You say there's two *women* goin' to live there? By Judas! I don't believe it!"

"Go and see for yourself, then," was the brusque answer.

"I shan't, neither. Who told you?"

"They did."

"They *did*? Was you there?"

"Yes."

"What for? I thought you swore never to go nigh a woman again."

"I did, but—well, it wasn't my fault. I—"

"Yes? Go on."

"I went because I couldn't help myself. Went to help some one else, in fact. I expected to find Graham and that other artist. But—"

"Well, go on."

"I was stung," said Mr. Brown gloomily, and rubbed his forehead.

CHAPTER VI.

During the following day, the occupants of the light keeper's dwelling saw little or nothing of the newcomers at the bungalow. Brown, his forehead resembling a section of a relief map of the Rocky Mountains, remained indoors as much as possible, working when there was anything to do, and reading back-number papers when there was not. Seth, who was on night duty, and therefore supposed to sleep during the most of the daylight hours, went to his room soon after breakfast, and remained there until late in the afternoon. His slumbers must, however, have been fitful ones, for several times the assistant, turning quickly, saw the bedroom door swing silently shut. The third time that this happened he ran to the door, and threw it open in season to catch Mr. Atkins in an undignified dive for the bed. A tremendous snore followed the dive.

The young man regarded him in silence for a few moments, during which the snores continued. Then he shook his head.

"Humph!" he soliloquized. "I must phone for the doctor at once. Either the doctor or the superintendent. If he has developed that habit, he isn't fit for this job."

He turned away. The slumberer stirred uneasily, rolled over, opened one eye, and sat up.

"Hi!" he called. "Come back here! Where you goin'?"

Brown returned, looking surprised and anxious.

"Oh!" he exclaimed. "Are you awake?"

"'Course I'm awake! What a fool question that is! Think I'm settin' up here and talkin' in my sleep?"

"Well, I didn't know."

"Why didn't you know? And, see here! What did you mean by sayin' you was goin' to phone the doctor or the superintendent, one or t'other? Yes, you said it. I heard you."

"Oh, no, you didn't."

"Tell you I did. Heard you with my own ears."

"But how could you? You weren't awake."

"'Course I was awake! Couldn't have heard you unless I was, could I? What ails you? Them stings go clear through to your brains, did they?"

Again Brown shook his head.

"This is dreadful!" he murmured.

"He walks in his sleep, and snores when he's awake. I *must* call the doctor."

"What—what—"

The light keeper's wrath was interfering with his utterance. He swung his legs over the side of the bed, and sputtered incoherently.

"Be calm, Seth," coaxed the assistant.

"Don't complicate your diseases by adding heart trouble. Three times to-day I've caught you peeping at me through the crack of that door. Within fifteen seconds of the last peep, I find you snoring. Therefore, I say—"

"Aw, belay! I was only—only just lookin' out to see what time it was."

"But you must have done it in your sleep, because—"

"I never. I was wide awake as you be."

"But why did you snore? You couldn't have fallen asleep between the door and the bed. And you hadn't quite reached the bed when I got here."

"I—I—I— Aw, shut up!"

Brown smiled blandly.

"I will," he said, "provided you promise to keep this door shut and don't do any more spying. I am *not* visiting our new neighbors, and I have no intention of doing so. Understand, please. Pleasant dreams."

There was no more spying, and At-

kins did not mention the circumstance when he appeared at supper time. After the meal, he bolted for the lights, and had not reappeared when his helper retired.

The next afternoon Brown descended the path to the boathouse. He was in the habit of taking a daily swim in the cove, a habit at which his superior openly scoffed.

"I should think," Seth declared over and over again, "that you'd had salt-water soak enough to last you for one spell. A feller that come as nigh drownin' as *you* done!"

Seth did not swim; the washtub every Saturday night furnished him with bathing sufficient.

The assistant had omitted his swim the day before. Now, however, he intended to have it. Simply because those female nuisances had seen fit to intrude where they had no business was no reason why he should resign all pleasure. He gave a quick glance upward at the opposite bank as he reached the wharf. There was no sign of life about the bungalow.

A cheap bathing suit was one of the luxuries Atkins had bought for him, on request, in Eastboro. The boathouse was his dressing room, though the fragrance of the ancient fish nets was not that of attar of roses. In a few minutes he was ready, and, emerging upon the wharf, walked briskly back along the shore of the creek to where it widened into the cove. There he plunged in, and was soon luxuriating in the cool, clear water.

He swam with long, confident strokes; those of a practiced swimmer. He enjoyed this. It was the one place where he could forget that he was no longer the only son of a wealthy father, heir to a respected name—which was *not* Brown—a young man with all sorts of brilliant prospects; could forget that he was now a disinherited vagabond, a loafer who had been unable to secure a respectable position, an outcast. He swam, and dove, and splashed, rejoicing in his strength, and youth, and the freedom of all outdoors.

Then, as he lay lazily paddling in

deep water, he heard the rattle of gravel on the steep bank on the other side of the cove. Looking up, he saw, to his huge disgust, a female figure, in a trim bathing suit, descending the bluff from the bungalow. It was the girl who had left him to fight the wasps. Her dark hair was covered with a jauntily tied colored handkerchief; and, against the yellow sand of the bluff, she made a very pretty picture. Not that Brown was interested; but she did, nevertheless.

She saw him, and waved a hand.

"Good morning," she called. "Beautiful day for a swim, isn't it?"

"Yes," growled the young man brusquely.

He turned, and began to swim in the opposite direction, up the cove. The girl looked after him, raised a puzzled eyebrow, and then, with a shrug, waded into the water. The next time the assistant looked at her, she was swimming with long, sweeping strokes down the narrow creek to the bend and the deep hole at the end of the wharf. Round that bend and through that hole the tide whirled like a rapid out into the miniature bay, behind Black Man's Point. Even at flood, and it was past that now, the current was strong. On the ebb it would carry a strong man out into the breakers. Seth had warned his helper of that spot and that tide when he first came.

And the girl was swimming directly there. Brown growled an exclamation of disgust. He had no mind to continue the acquaintance, and yet he couldn't permit her to do that.

"Miss Graham!" he called. "Oh, Miss Graham!"

She heard him, but did not stop.

"Yes," she called in answer, continuing to swim. "What is it?"

"You mustn't—" shouted Brown.

Then he remembered that he must not shout. Shouting might awaken the light keeper, and the latter would misunderstand the situation, of course. So he cut his warning to one word.

"Wait!" he called, and began swimming toward her.

She did not come to meet him, but

merely ceased swimming, and turned on her back to float. And, floating, the tide would carry her on almost as rapidly as if she assisted it. That tide did not need any assistance. Brown swung on his side, and settled into the racing stroke, the stroke which had won him cups at the athletic club.

He reached her in a time so short that she was surprised into an admiring comment.

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "You *can* swim!"

He did not thank her for the compliment. There was no time for that, even if he had felt like it.

"You shouldn't be here," he said sharply.

She looked at him.

"Why, what do you mean?" she demanded.

"It isn't safe. A little farther and the tide would carry you out to sea. Come back—back up to the cove at once."

He expected her to ask more questions, but she did not. Instead, she turned and struck out in silence. Against the tide, even there, the pull was tremendous.

"Shall I help you?" he asked.

"No. I can make it."

And she did. It was his turn to be surprised into admiration.

"By Jove!" he panted, as they swung into the quiet water of the cove and stood erect in the shallows. "That was great! You are a good swimmer."

"Thank you," she answered breathlessly. "It *was* a tug, wasn't it? Thank you for warning me. Now tell me about the dangerous places, please."

He told her, repeating Seth's tales of the tide's strength.

"But it is safe enough here?" she asked.

"Oh, yes! Perfectly safe anywhere this side of the narrow part—the creek."

"I'm so glad. This water is glorious, and I'd begun to be afraid I should have to give it up."

"The creek and even the bay itself are safe enough at flood," he went on.

"I often go there, then. When the tide is coming in, it is all right even for——"

He paused. She finished the sentence for him.

"Even for a girl, you were going to say."

She waded forward to where the shoal ended and the deeper part began. There she turned to look at him over her shoulder.

"I'm going to that beach over there," she said, pointing across the cove. "Do you want to race?"

Without waiting to see whether he did or not, she struck out for the beach. And, without stopping to consider why he did it, the young man followed her.

The race was not so one-sided. Brown won it by some yards, but he had to work hard. His competitor did not give up when she found herself falling behind, but was game to the end.

"Well!" she gasped. "You beat me, didn't you? I never could get that side stroke, and it's ever so much faster."

"It's simple enough. Just a knack. I'll teach you if you like."

"Will you? That's splendid."

"You are the strongest swimmer, Miss Graham, for a girl, that I ever saw. You must have practiced a great deal."

"Yes, Horace—my brother—taught me. He is a splendid swimmer; one of the very best."

"Horace Graham? Why, you don't mean Horace Graham, of the Harvard Athletic?"

"Yes, I do. He is my brother. But how— Do you know him?"

The surprise in her tone was evident. Brown bit his lip. He remembered that Cape Cod light keepers' helpers were not, as a usual thing, supposed to be widely acquainted in college athletic circles.

"I have met him," he stammered.

"But where——" she began; and then: "Why, of course! You met him here. I forgot that he has been your neighbor for three summers."

The assistant had forgotten it, too, but he was thankful for the reminder.

"Yes. Yes, certainly," he said.

She regarded him with a puzzled look.

"It's odd he didn't mention you," she observed. "He has told me a great deal about the bungalow, and the sea views, and the loneliness and quaintness of it all. That was what made me wish to spend a month down here and experience it myself. And he has often spoken"—with an irrepressible smile—"of your—of the light keeper, Mr. Atkins—that is his name, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"I want to meet him. Horace said he was—well, rather odd, but, when you knew him, a fine fellow and full of dry humor. I'm sure I should like him."

Brown smiled also—and broadly. He mentally pictured Seth's reception of the news that he was "liked" by the young lady across the cove. And then it occurred to him, with startling suddenness, that he had been conversing very familiarly with that young lady, notwithstanding the solemn interchange of vows between the light keeper and himself.

"I must be going," he said hastily. "Good morning, Miss Graham."

He waded to the shore, and strode rapidly back toward the boathouse. His companion called after him.

"I shall expect you to-morrow afternoon," she said. "You've promised to teach me that side stroke, remember."

Brown dressed in a great hurry, and climbed the path to the lights at the double quick. All was safe and serene in the house, and he breathed more freely. Atkins was sound asleep, really asleep, in the bedroom, and when he emerged he was evidently quite unaware of his helper's unpremeditated treason.

Brown's conscience pricked him, however, and he went to bed that night vowing over and over that he would be more careful thereafter. He would take care not to meet the Graham girl again. Having reached this decision, there remained nothing but to put her out of his mind entirely; which he succeeded in doing at a quarter after two the next morning. Even then she was not entirely absent, for he dreamed a ridiculous dream about her.

Next day he did not go for a swim, but remained in the house. Seth, at supper, demanded to know what ailed him.

"You're as mum as the oldest inhabitant of a deaf-and-dumb asylum," was the light keeper's comment; "and ugly as a bull in fly time. What ails you?"

"Nothing."

"Humph! Better take somethin' for it, seems to me. Little 'Stomach Balm'; hey? No? Well, go to bed! Your room's enough sight better'n your company just now."

The assistant's ill nature was in evidence again at breakfast time. Seth endeavored to joke him out of it; but not succeeding, and finding his best jokes received with groans instead of laughter, gave it up in disgust, and retired. The young man cleared the table, piled the dishes in the sink, heated a kettle full of water, and began the day's drudgery—drudgery which he once thought was fun.

Why had he the ill luck to fall overboard from that steamer? Or why didn't he drown when he did fall overboard? Then he would have been comfortably dead, at all events. Why hadn't he stayed in New York or Boston, or somewhere, and kept on trying for a position, for work—any kind of work? He might have starved while trying, but people who were starving were self-respecting, and when they met other people—for instance, sisters of fellows they used to know—had nothing to be ashamed of, and needn't lie—unless they wanted to. He was a common loafer, under a false name, down on a sand heap washing dishes. At this point he dropped one of the dishes—a plate—and broke it.

"Damn!" observed John Brown, under his breath, but with enthusiasm.

He stooped to pick up the fragments of the plate, and, rising once more to an erect position, found himself facing Miss Ruth Graham. She was standing in the doorway.

"Don't mind me, please," she said. "No doubt I should feel the same way if it were my plate."

The young man's first move, after

recovery, was to make sure that the door between the kitchen and the hall leading to the light keeper's bedroom was shut. It was, fortunately. The young lady watched him in silence, though her eyes were shining.

"Good morning, Mr. Brown," she observed gravely.

The assistant murmured a good morning from force of habit.

"There's another piece you haven't picked up," continued the visitor, pointing.

Brown picked up the piece.

"Is Mr. Atkins in?" inquired the girl.

"Yes; he's—he's in."

"May I see him, please?"

"I—I——"

"If he's busy I can wait." She seated herself in a chair. "Don't let me interrupt you," she continued. "You were busy, too, weren't you?"

"I was washing dishes," declared Brown savagely.

"Oh!"

"Yes. Washing, and sweeping, and doing scrubwoman's work are my regular employments."

"Indeed! Then I'm just in time to help. Is this the dish towel?" regarded it dubiously.

"It is; but I don't need any help, thank you."

"Of course you do. Every one is glad to be helped at doing dishes. I may as well make myself useful while I'm waiting for Mr. Atkins."

She picked up a platter and proceeded to wipe it, quite as a matter of course. Brown, swearing inwardly, turned fiercely to the suds.

"Did you wish to see Atkins on particular business?" he asked, a moment later.

"Oh, no. I wanted to make his acquaintance, that's all. Horace told me so many interesting things about him. By the way, was it last summer, or the summer before, that you met my brother here?"

No answer. Miss Graham repeated her question.

"Was it last summer, or the summer before?" she asked.

"Oh—er—I don't remember. Last summer, I think."

"Why, you must remember! How could any one forget anything that happened down here? So few things do happen, I should say. So you met him last summer?"

"Yes."

"Hum! That's odd."

"Shall I call Atkins? He's in his room."

"I say it is odd because when Mrs. Bascom and I first met you, you told us this was your first summer here."

There wasn't any answer to this; at least, the assistant could think of none at the moment.

"Do you wish me to call Atkins?" he asked sharply. "He's asleep, but I can wake him."

"Oh! He's asleep. Now I understand why you whisper even when you sw—that is, when you break a plate. You were afraid of waking him. How considerate you are."

Brown put down the dish cloth.

"It isn't altogether consideration for him—or for myself," he said grimly. "I didn't care to wake him unless you took the responsibility."

"Why?"

"Because, Miss Graham, Seth Atkins took the position of light keeper here almost for the sole reason that no women ever came here. Mr. Atkins is a woman hater of the most rabid type. I'll wake him up if you wish, but I won't be responsible for the consequences."

The young lady stared at him in surprise—delighted surprise, apparently, judging by the expression of her face.

"A woman hater?" she repeated. "Is he really?"

"He is."

Mr. Brown neglected to add that he, also, had declared himself a member of the same fraternity. Perhaps he thought it was not necessary.

"A woman hater!" Miss Graham fairly bubbled with mischievous joy. "Oh, jolly! Now I'm crazy to meet him!"

The assistant moved toward the hall door.

"Very good!" he observed, with grim

determination. "I think he'll cure your lunacy."

His hand was outstretched toward the latch when the young lady spoke again.

"Wait a minute," she said. "Perhaps I had better not wake him now."

"Just as you say. The pleasure is—or will be—entirely mine, I assure you."

"No-o. On the whole, I think I'll wait until later. I may call again. Good morning."

She moved across the threshold. Then, standing on the mica slab, which was the step to the kitchen door, she turned to say:

"You didn't swim yesterday."

"No-o. I—I was busy."

"I see."

She paused, as if expecting him to say something further on the subject. He was silent. Her manner changed.

"Good morning," she said coldly, and walked off. The assistant watched her as she descended the path to the cove, but she did not once look back. Brown threw himself into a chair. He had never hated any one as thoroughly as he hated himself at that moment.

"What a cheerful liar she must think I am," he reflected. "She caught me in that fool yarn about meeting her brother here last summer; and now, after deliberately promising to teach her that stroke, I don't go near her. What a miserable liar she must think I am! And I guess I am."

The tide served for bathing at about three that afternoon. At ten minutes before that hour, the substitute assistant light keeper of Eastboro Twin Lights tiptoed silently to the bedroom of his superior, and peeped in. Seth was snoring peacefully. Brown stealthily withdrew. At three precisely he emerged from the boathouse on the wharf, clad in his bathing suit. And at five minutes after three, Seth Atkins, in his stocking feet and with suspicion in his eye, crept along the path to the edge of the bluff. Crouching behind a convenient sand dune, he raised his head and peered over it.

Below him was the cove, its pleasant waters a smooth, deep blue, streaked and bordered with pale green. But the water

itself did not interest Seth. In that water was his helper, John Brown, of nowhere in particular; John Brown, the hater of females, busily engaged in teaching a young woman to swim.

Atkins watched this animated picture for some time. Then, carefully crawling back up the path until he was well out of possible sight from the cove, he rose to his feet, raised both hands, and shook their clenched fists above his head.

"The liar!" grated Mr. Atkins between his teeth. "The traitor! The young blackguard! After tellin' me that he— And after me doin' everythin' for him that— Oh, by Judas! Wait! Only wait till he comes back! I'll larn him! I'll show him! Oh, by Judas priest!"

He strode toward the kitchen and through the doorway. Then he stopped short. A woman was seated in the kitchen rocker. A stout woman, a pleasant-faced, matter-of-fact, common-sense woman.

"Hello, Seth!" said Mrs. Bascom, housekeeper at the bungalow. "I was wonderin' if you was up or out or where. Don't stand gawpin' like that. You and me was bound to meet again sooner or later. I come over to borrow some saleratus. Got any to spare?"

The light keeper staggered back until his shoulders struck the doorpost.

"Good Lord!" he gasped. "Good Lord! Why—why—Emcline!"

CHAPTER VII.

When, an hour later, the swimming teacher, his guilty conscience pricking him, and the knowledge of having been false to his superior strong within him, came sneaking into the kitchen, he was startled and horrified to find the light keeper awake and dressed. Mentally he braced himself for the battery of embarrassing questions which, he felt sure, he should have to answer. It might be that he must face something more serious than questions. Quite possibly Seth, finding him absent, had investigated—and seen. Well, if he had, then he had, that was all. The murder would

be out, and Eastboro Twin Lights would shortly be shy a substitute assistant keeper.

But there were no embarrassing questions. Atkins scarcely noticed him. Seated in the kitchen rocker, he looked up as the young man entered, and immediately looked down again. He seemed to be in a sort of waking dream, and only dimly conscious of happenings about him.

"Hello!" hailed the assistant, with an assumption of casual cheerfulness.

"Hey? Oh! How be you?" was Mr. Atkins' reply.

"I've been for my dip," explained Brown. "The water was bully to-day."

"Want to know!"

"You're up early, aren't you?"

"Hey? Yes, I guess likely I be."

"What's wrong? Not sick, are you?"

"No. 'Course I ain't sick. Say!" Seth seemed to take a sudden interest in the conversation. "You come straight up from the cove, have you?"

"Yes. Why?"

"You ain't been hangin' around outside here, have you?"

"Hanging around outside! What do you mean?"

"Nothin'. Why do you stand there starin' at me as if I was some sort of dime-show curiosity? Anything queer about me?"

"No. I didn't know I was staring."

The young man was bewildered by this strange behavior. He was prepared for suspicion concerning his own actions; but Seth seemed rather to be defending himself from suspicion on the part of his helper.

"Humph!" The light keeper looked keenly at him for a moment. Then he said:

"Well, ain't there nothin' to do but stand around? Gettin' pretty nigh to supper time, ain't it? Put the kettle on and set the table."

It was not supper time, but Brown obeyed orders. Seth went to cooking. He spoke, perhaps, three words during the culinary operations, and a half dozen more during the meal. Brown's fears returned. The swimming lesson

must have been discovered. He went to bed prepared for trouble next morning.

But there was no trouble. That day and for many days thereafter the light keeper was urbanity itself. He and his helper had never been more anxious to please each other, and the house at the Twin Lights was—to all appearances—an abode of perfect trust and peace. But every day, when the tide served, the assistant swam in the cove, and almost every day he met Miss Graham there. During the first week, he returned from his dips fearful of discovery. After that his feelings changed. Regardless of what might happen, he intended to meet her. There was no harm in it. It was his right, if he chose, and he would tell Atkins so. But, as the latter never mentioned the young lady or hinted at a suspicion, he did not tell him.

It may be gathered from this that Brown had changed his mind concerning the opposite sex. He had changed in other ways, also; though just how much he did not realize until a day in August, when he and the girl from the bungalow were walking together on the beach. Seth was asleep, or supposed to be, and the assistant was on duty—or supposed to be. Little or nothing happened during the day at the lights, and—as no more picnics came—Brown felt safe in leaving for short periods, provided he did not go far away.

Once, returning after a rather prolonged absence, he caught sight of a figure running, in a crouching position, over the dunes at the back of the cove, apparently having come from the direction of the bungalow. He recognized the figure as Atkins, surmised that the latter had been watching him, and prepared for war. But Seth explained that he couldn't sleep, and had "jest been loafin' around seein' what the prospects was for a beach-plum crop this fall."

He did not ask a single question concerning his helper's whereabouts or what the latter had been doing. He was so trustful and unsuspecting that Brown felt almost wicked, as if he were deceiving a child.

The day on which he and Miss Graham were walking together was one in

the middle of August. They had met casually—that is, she was strolling on the sand, and the assistant happened to see her, and strolled in the same direction. They were always surprised to meet each other on occasions of this kind. Having expressed their surprise and exchanged views concerning the weather, the conversation drifted here and there, with occasional intervals of silence, which the young lady was always the first to break.

After one of these intervals, she seated herself on a rock near high-water mark, and observed, looking out over the bay and the point with its line of curling breakers:

"I shall miss all this"—with a wave of her hand toward the waves—"next week when I am back again in the city."

Brown was fanning himself with his cap as she began to speak. After she had finished, he stooped to pick up the cap, which had fallen to the sand.

"You are going away—next week?" he said slowly.

"We are going day after to-morrow. I shall remain in Boston for a few days. Then I shall visit a friend in the Berkshires. After that I may join my brother in Europe. I'm not sure as to that."

"Day after to-morrow!"

"Yes!"

There was another one of those embarrassing intervals. Miss Graham spoke first, as usual.

"Mr. Brown—" she began.

The substitute assistant interrupted her.

"Please don't call me that," he blurted. "It—oh, confound it, it isn't my name!"

She should have been very much surprised. He expected her to be. Instead, she answered quite calmly.

"I know it," she said.

"You do?"

"Yes. You are 'Russ' Brooks, aren't you?"

Russell Brooks, alias John Brown, dropped his cap again, but did not pick it up. He swallowed hard.

"How on earth did you know that?" he asked, as soon as he could say anything.

"Oh, it was simple enough. I didn't really know. I only guessed. You weren't a real light keeper, that was plain. And you weren't used to washing dishes or doing housework, that"—with the irrepressible curl of the corners of her lips—"was just as plain. When you told me that fib about meeting my brother here last summer, I was sure you had met him somewhere, probably at college. So in my next letter to him, I described you as well as I could, mentioned that you were as good or a better swimmer than he, and asked for particulars. He answered that the only fellow he could think of who fitted your description was 'Russ' Brooks—Russell, I suppose—of New York; though what Russ Brooks was doing as light keeper's assistant at Eastboro Twin Lights, he *didn't* know. Neither did I. But, then, *that* was not my business."

The assistant did not answer; he could not, on such short notice.

"So," continued the girl, "I felt almost as if I had known you for a long time. You and Horace were such good friends at college, and he had often told me of you. I was very glad to meet you in real life, especially here, where I had no one but Emeline—Mrs. Bascom—to talk to. Mr. Atkins, by reason of his aversion to my unfortunate sex, being barred."

Mr. Brown's—or Mr. Brooks'—next speech harked back to her previous one.

"I'll tell you why I'm here," he began.

"You needn't unless you wish," she said. "I have no right to know." Adding, with characteristic femininity: "Though I'm dying to."

"But I want you to know. As I told Atkins when I first came, I haven't murdered any one, and I haven't stolen anything. I'm not a crook running from justice. I'm just a plain idiot, who fell overboard from a steamer, and," bitterly, "hadn't the good luck to drown."

She made no comment, and he began his story, telling it much as he had told it to the light keeper.

"There!" he said, in conclusion. "That's the whole fool business. That's

why I'm here. No need to ask what you think of it, I suppose."

She was silent, gazing at the breakers. He drew his own conclusions from her silence.

"I see," he said. "Well, I admit it. I'm a low-down chump. Still, if I had it to do over again, I should do pretty much the same. A few things differently, but in general the very same."

"What would you do differently?" she asked, still without looking at him.

"For one thing, I wouldn't run away. I'd stay and face the music. Earn my living or starve."

"And now you're going to stay here?"

"No longer than I can help. If I get the appointment as assistant keeper, I'll begin to save every cent I can. Just as soon as I get enough to warrant risking it, I'll head for Boston once more, and begin the earning or starving process. "And," with a snap of his jaws, "I don't intend to starve."

"You won't go back to your father?"

"If he sees fit to beg my pardon and acknowledge that I was right—not otherwise. And he must do it of his own accord. I told him that when I walked out of his office. It was my contribution to our fond farewells. His was that he would see me damned first. Possibly he may."

She smiled.

"You must have been a charming pair of pepper pots," she observed. "And the young lady—what of her?"

"She knows that I am fired, cut off even without the usual shilling. That will be quite sufficient for her, I think."

"How do you know it will? How do you know she might not have been willing to wait while you earned that living you are so sure is coming?"

"Wait? She wait for me? Ann Davidson wait for a man without a cent, while he tried to earn a good many dollars? Humph! You amuse me."

"Why not? You didn't give her a chance. You calmly took it for granted that she wanted only money and social position, and you walked off and left her. How do you know she wouldn't have liked you better for telling her

just how you felt? If a girl really cared for a man, it seems to me that she would be willing to wait for him, years and years if it were necessary, provided that, during that time, he was trying his best for her."

"But—but—she isn't that kind of a girl."

"How do you know? You didn't put her to the test. You owed her that. It seems to me you owe it to her now."

The answer to this was on his tongue. It was ready behind his closed lips, eager to burst forth. That he didn't love the Davidson girl, never had loved her. That, during the past month, he had come to realize there was but one woman in the wide world for him. And did that woman mean what she said about waiting years and years, provided she cared? And did she care?

He didn't utter one word of this. He wanted to, but it seemed so preposterous. Such an idiotic, outrageous thing to ask. Yet it is probable that he would have asked it if the interruption had not come. From the bungalow, Mrs. Bascom called: "Dinner! Miss Ruth! Dinner's ready."

Miss Graham sprang up from her seat on the rock.

"Gracious!" she exclaimed. "Is it dinner time already? It is—after twelve o'clock. Good morning, Mr.—er—Brown. I suppose I'd better call you that in public, at least."

She started to climb the bluff. The assistant ran after her.

"Miss Graham," he said anxiously. "I shall see you again? To-morrow, at bathing time, perhaps?"

She shook her head.

"I don't know," she answered. "I shall be very busy getting ready to leave. But perhaps so."

He spent the balance of the day somehow, he couldn't have told how. At eight o'clock he announced that he was sleepy, and went to his room. There he sat by the window until one, at which time he tiptoed to the living room, found Seth's meager assortment of pens, ink, and note paper, returned, closed the door carefully, and sat down by the little table.

For three mortal hours he thought, wrote, tore up what he had written, and rewrote. At last the result of the night's labor read something like this:

DEAR MISS GRAHAM: I could not say it yesterday, although if you had stayed I think I should. But I must say it now or it may be too late. I can't let you go without saying it. I love you. Will you wait for me? It may be a very long wait, although God knows I mean to try harder than I have ever tried for anything in my life. If I live I will make a man of myself yet, with you as my inspiration. You know you said if a girl really cared for a man she would willingly wait years for him. Do you care for me as much as that? With you, or for you, I believe I can accomplish anything. Do you care?

RUSSELL BROOKS.

He put this in an envelope, sealed and addressed it, and crept silently out of the house, past the light tower, where he knew Seth was on guard, ran down the path, around the edge of the cove, and up to the door of the bungalow. Under the edge of that door he tucked the note. As soon as this was accomplished, he became aware that he had expressed himself very clumsily. He had not written as he might. A dozen brilliant thoughts came to him. He must rewrite that note at all hazards.

So he spent five frantic minutes trying to coax the envelope from under the door. But, in his care to push it far enough, it had dropped beyond the sill, and he could not reach it. The thing was done for better or for worse. Perfectly certain that it was for worse, he crept mournfully back to his room, and sat by the window until morning.

The breakfast which he prepared was not a success. The coffee had boiled too long, and the eggs not long enough. It made little difference to him, he had no appetite; but Seth was, according to his own admission, "fussy about vittles," and likely to grumble. Brown almost hoped he would. A lively scrap would have fitted his feelings beautifully, and he was ready with the answer which does not turn away wrath.

But the light keeper did not grumble. His usual vigorous appetite seemed to be on a vacation. He drank the bitter coffee without protest, and meekly swallowed a few spoonfuls of watery egg.

The pair scarcely spoke during the meal. As they rose from the table, Atkins said:

"I cal'late you didn't have a very good night's rest, did you?"

Brown started, and eyed his employer suspiciously.

"Why?" he demanded. "What makes you think that?"

"Oh, nothin', nothin'. Thought you looked sort of tired, that's all. I was goin' to say that I wasn't very sleepy myself, and I'd just as soon set up a spell. Why don't you turn in and get a little nap? I'll do the dishes."

"I'm not tired. Better turn in yourself. It's your bedtime."

"I know, but I ain't sleepy, somehow. You'd better take a little extry nap. 'Twill do you good."

"I don't need it, thank you. Go to bed; I'm all right."

But Seth did not go to bed. Instead, he wandered about in an aimless fashion, sitting down, getting up again, going out of doors, and returning, in a manner which made his companion nervous.

"What ails you?" inquired the young man testily. "You're as uneasy as a fish out of water."

"Hey? Oh, nothin'. Guess that coffee of yours was a leetle mite too strong for me."

The coffee was strong, so this seemed a plausible reason; but the helper was annoyed, nevertheless. Company, in his present state of mind, was a nuisance. Moreover, the forenoon was passing, and high water—the time for swimming—was eleven o'clock. Miss Graham had not promised to be at the cove at that hour, but she had said she might be; and the future of John Brown, alias Russell Brooks, depended upon his seeing her. She was going away, for good, early the next day. Suppose she should go without answering the question in his note. He was fearful of that answer, but he must hear it from her own lips.

He grew more nervous every minute, and, oddly enough, the light keeper seemed as nervous as he.

"Do go to bed," snapped the young

man for the tenth time. "Are you going to sit up all day? It's after ten now."

Seth, standing in the doorway, answered absently.

"Is it?" he said.

"Is it? You know it is. You've been doing nothing but look at your watch for the last half hour. What ails you, anyway?"

"I was thinkin'," replied Seth slowly, "that I didn't know but I'd harness up and drive over to the village. I've got an errand or two over there."

"You have? Why, you went there only three days ago."

"I know. But I forgot somethin'. Think you can get along if I leave you?"

"Of course I can. Go, by all means. I'll harness for you."

He was afraid that the light keeper might notice the eagerness in his tone, and started for the stable without waiting for a reply. Atkins seemed about to speak, and then to think better of it. As soon as his companion had departed, he hurried to his own room.

When Brown came back, leading the old horse attached to the buggy, Seth called to him from the window.

"Say!" he said, "I've got my whip down to the boathouse. Don't you want to run down and fetch it for me, like a good feller?"

"Sure!"

The assistant was only too willing to oblige, to do anything to hasten his superior's departure. As he left the kitchen, he glanced at the clock. At the edge of the bluff he looked across the cove. A figure, in a blue bathing suit, was standing by the bungalow. His heart gave a great leap. She was coming! She was coming—to meet him! Did that mean—

The whip was nowhere in sight, but that was not astonishing. There were so many things in that boathouse, all heaped together, that only the upper layer was in plain view. Hastily he pawed over the pile. The door swung shut behind him, but he scarcely noticed it. She was coming to meet him. His case could not be altogether hopeless, or she would not do that.

Confound the whip! Atkins could

not have left it there. It was a queer place to leave it, anyway. Impatiently he turned to the doorway, and gave it a push. It did not open, so he pushed harder. Still it did not budge. It was a heavy door, of inch-thick planks, and the fogs had probably caused it to swell and stick. He threw his whole weight against it, and felt it give at top and bottom, but remain firm in the middle. Then he understood the door was locked!

He dropped on one knee and looked through the keyhole. The door was locked and the key was gone. More than that, the person who had locked it could be seen, through that keyhole, running at full speed up the path. He was in sight only an instant, but that was enough. Seth Atkins, the light keeper!

Brown's first act, an instinctive one, was to yell through the keyhole for Atkins to come back. At first he commanded, then begged, then threatened. Commands, and pleadings, and threats were alike useless. Seth had gone. The assistant, raging, stormed at the door, and tried his level best to break the lock. But the lock was a new one, and not to be broken.

Then he ran about the little building looking for other avenues of escape. The only window was a narrow affair, high up at the back, hung on hinges and fastened with a hook and staple. He climbed up on the fish nets and empty boxes, got the window open, and thrust his head and one shoulder through the opening. That, however, was as far as he could go. A dwarf might have squeezed through that window, but not an ex-varsity athlete like Russell Brooks or a husky longshoreman like John Brown. Moreover, it was at the back, facing the mouth of the creek and the sea. It afforded a beautiful marine view, but that was all. He could not even get a glimpse of the bungalow. He dropped back on the fish nets, and audibly expressed his opinion of the man who had imprisoned him.

It was plain enough, of course. Atkins had been "on" all the time. He had known of his meetings with Ruth Graham, had kept watch of the proceed-

ings, had known—or guessed—that the occupants of the bungalow intended leaving, and had determined to prevent dangerous farewells by shutting up his helper. It was a part of their mutual compact. Seth had not hit him, as requested, with the kindling hatchet, but had adopted the milder punishment of imprisoning him in the boathouse. Doubtless he was to be kept there for twenty-four hours. Then Miss Graham and her housekeeper would be out of the way, and the danger—as Seth reckoned danger—would be over. It was perfectly fair, just what he ought to have expected and had asked for. Incidentally it was maddening, and not to be borne.

He spent the next half hour in carefully going over every inch of the walls of his jail, hunting for a weak place, but found none. The boathouse was government property, old, but honestly built. Then in despair he sat down upon the nets, and groaned. The bathing period was over already. She had come to meet him, and he had not kept his appointment. She would believe he had repented of his declaration, as embodied in the fateful note, and was hiding from her. She had intimated that he was a coward in not seeing his fiancée and telling her the truth. She did not like his writing and running away. Now she would believe the cowardice was inherent, because he had written her also—and had run away. Horrible! What he would do to the blameless Atkins when the latter did free him was not fit to print.

The sunlight streamed through the little window, and fell directly upon a pile of Boston and New York papers thrown there by Seth the day before. They were papers which the light keeper had brought from Eastboro Center on his most recent return from that metropolis. Atkins had read them pretty thoroughly, but his assistant had not. Newspapers reminded him too keenly of what he had been, and he avoided them. They appealed to him as fire kindlers, but that was all.

Now his eyes fell distractedly upon the topmost paper of the pile. It was a

New York journal, which devotes two of its inside pages to happenings in society. It was folded so that one of these pages lay uppermost. Absently, scarcely realizing that he was doing so, the substitute assistant read as follows:

Engagement in high life announced. Another American girl to wed a nobleman. Miss Ann Gardner Davidson to become the Baroness Hardacre.

Another contemplated matrimonial alliance between one of New York's fairest daughters and a scion of the English nobility was made public yesterday. Miss Ann Gardner Davidson, of this city, the breaking of whose engagement to Russell Agnew Brooks, son of George Agnew Brooks, the wealthy cotton broker, was the sensation of the early spring, is to marry Herbert Ainsworth-Ainsworth, Baron Hardacre, of Hardacre Towers, Surrey on Kent, England. It was said that the young lady broke off her former engagement with young Brooks because of—

The prisoner in the boathouse read no farther. Ruth Graham had said to him the day before that, in her opinion, he had treated Ann Davidson unfairly. He should have gone to her, and told her of his quarrel with his father. Although he did not care for Ann, she might care for him. Might care enough to wait, and— Wait? Why, she cared so little that, within a few months, she was ready to marry another man. And, if he owed her any debt of honor, no matter how far-fetched and fantastic, it was canceled now. He was absolutely free. And he had been right all the time. He could prove it. He would show Ruth Graham that paper, and—

His jaw set tight, and he rose from the heap of fish nets with the folded paper clenched like a club in his hand. He was going to get out of that boathouse if he had to butt a hole through its boards with his head.

Once more he climbed to the window, and made an attempt to squeeze through. It was futile, of course; but this time it seemed to him that the sill and the plank to which it was attached gave a little. He put the paper between his teeth, seized the sill with both hands, braced his feet against a beam below, and jerked with all his strength. Once—twice—three times! It was giving!

It was pulling loose! He landed on his back upon the nets, sill and a foot of boarding in his hands. In exactly five seconds, the folded newspaper jammed in his trousers pocket, he swung through the opening, and dropped to the narrow space between the building and the end of the wharf.

The space was a bare six inches wide. As he struck, his ankle turned under him, he staggered, tried wildly to regain his balance, and fell into the water.

It was nearly twelve o'clock, and the ebb tide was foaming around the end of the wharf.

CHAPTER VIII.

When he came to the surface and shook the water from his eyes, he was already some distance from the wharf. This, an indication of the force of the tide, should have caused him to realize his danger instantly. But it did not. His mind was intent upon the accomplishment of one thing—namely, the proving to Ruth Graham, by means of the item in the paper, that he was no longer under any possible obligation to the Davidson girl. Therefore, his sole feeling, as he came sputtering to the top of the water, was disgust at his own clumsiness. It was when he tried to turn and swim back to the wharf that he grasped the situation as it was. He could not swim against that tide.

There was no time to consider what was best to do. The breakers were only five hundred yards off, and if he wished to live, he must keep out of their clutches. He began to swim diagonally across the current, putting all his strength into each stroke. But for every foot of progress toward the calmer water he was borne a yard toward the breakers.

The tide bubbled and gurgled about him. Miniature whirlpools tugged at his legs, pulling him under. He fought nobly, setting his teeth, and swearing inwardly that he would make it, he would not give up, he would not drown. But the edge of the tide rip was a long way off, and he was growing tired already. Another whirlpool sucked him

down, and when he rose he shouted for help. It was an instinctive, unreasoning appeal, almost sure to be useless—for who could hear him?—but he shouted, nevertheless.

And the shout was answered. From somewhere behind him—a long, long distance, so it seemed to him—came the clear call in a woman's voice:

"All right! I'm coming. Keep on, just as you are."

He kept on, or tried to. He swam—and swam—and swam. He went under, rose, went under again, fought his way up, and kept on swimming. Through the gurgle and hiss of the water, sounding dully above the humming in his ears and the roar of the blood in his tired brain, came the clear voice again:

"Steady, now! Just as you are! One more stroke! Now one more! Quick! Quick! Now! Can you get aboard?"

The wet, red side of a dory's bow pushed past his laboring shoulder. A hand clutched his shirt collar. He reached up and grasped the boat's gunwale, hung on with all his weight, threw one leg over the edge, and tumbled into the dory's bottom.

"Thanks," he panted, his eyes shut. "That—was—about the closest call I—ever had. Hey? Why! *Ruth!*"

She was panting, also, but she was not looking at him. She was rowing with all her might, and gazing fearfully over her shoulder.

"Are you strong enough to help me row?" she asked breathlessly. "We must head her away from here, out of this tide. And I'm afraid that—I can't—do it alone."

He raised his head and looked over the rail. The breakers were alarmingly close. He scrambled to the thwart, pushed her aside, and seized the oars. She resisted.

"Only one," she gasped. "I can manage the other."

So, each with an oar, they fought the tide. And won—but by the narrowest of margins. The dory edged into stiller and shoaler water, crept out of the ed-dying channel over the flat where the depth was but a scant four feet, turned

almost by inches, and, at last, slid up on the sandy beach below the bungalow. The girl sat bowed over the handle of her oar, her breast heaving. She said nothing. Her companion likewise said nothing. Staggering, he stepped over the side, tossed the anchor a few feet up the beach, and then tumbled in an unconscious heap on the sand.

He was not unconscious long, being a healthy and robust young fellow. His first thought, upon opening his eyes, was that he must close them again as quickly as possible because he wanted the dream to continue. To lie with one's head in the lap of an angel, while that angel strokes your forehead, and cries over you, and begs you for her sake not to die, is too precious a delusion to lose. But the opening of one's eyes is a mistake under such circumstances, and Brooks had made it. The angel's next remark was entirely unromantic and practical.

"Are you better?" she asked. "You're all right now, aren't you?"

Her patient's reply was also a question, and irrelevant.

"Do you care?" he asked faintly.

"Are you better?" she asked, in return.

"Did you get my note? The note I put under the door?"

"Answer me. Are you all right again?"

"You answer *me*. Did you get my note?"

"Yes. Don't try to get up. You're not strong enough yet. You must wait here while I go and get you some——"

"Don't go!" He almost shouted it. "If—if you do, I'll—I'll—I think I'm going to faint again."

"Oh, no, you're not. And I must go and get you some brandy or something. Stay just where you are."

"Ruth Graham, if you go away now I'll go with you, if I have to crawl. Maybe I can't walk, but I swear I'll crawl after you on my hands and knees unless you answer my question. Do you care enough for me to wait?"

She looked out at the little bay, at the narrow, wicked tide race, at the

breakers beyond. Then she looked down again at him.

"Yes," she said. "Oh, *are* you going to faint again? Don't! Please don't!"

Russell Agnew Brooks—John Brown no more forever—reopened his eyes.

"I am not going to faint," he observed. "I was merely trying to realize that I was fully conscious."

Some time after this—hours and minutes do not count in paradise—he remembered the item in the paper.

"By George!" he exclaimed. "I had something to show you. I'm afraid I've lost it. Oh, no! Here it is."

He extracted from his trousers pocket the water-soaked lump that had been the New York newspaper. The page containing the sensational announcement of the engagement in high life was quite undecipherable. Being on the outside of the folded paper, it had rubbed to a pulpy blur. However, he told her about it, and she agreed that his judgment of the character of the future Baroness Hardacre had been absolutely correct.

"You were very wise," she said sagely.

"Not so wise as I've become since," he asserted, with decision. Then added, with a rather rueful smile: "I'm afraid, dear, people won't say as much for you when they know."

"I'm satisfied."

"You may have to wait all those years—and years—you spoke of."

"I will."

But she did not have to. For, at that moment, the miracle of wisdom beside her sat up and pointed to the wet newspaper lying on the sand at her feet.

"Has my happiness affected my wits?" he demanded. "Or does salt water bring on delusions? Aren't those my initials?"

He was pointing to a paragraph in the "Personals" column of the New York paper. This, being on one of the inside pages, had remained comparatively dry, and could be read. The particular "Personal" to which he pointed was this:

R. A. B. Wherever you are. This is to certify that I hereby acknowledge that you have been absolutely correct in the A. D. matter; witness news elsewhere. I was a fool, and I apologize publicly. Incidentally I need a head like yours in my business. Come back. Partnership awaiting you. Come back; and marry anybody or nobody, as you see fit.

FATHER.

"But why," asked Ruth, as they entered the bungalow together, "isn't Mrs. Bascom here? And there are no signs of dinner. How queer! But she has been acting queerly lately."

"Isn't that a letter on the table?" inquired Brooks. "It is a letter, and addressed to you. By George! I believe that's Atkins' handwriting."

The letter was a mere pencil scribble on a bit of blue-ruled note paper, the latter folded about a key. On the paper, Seth had written:

This is the key to my boathouse. Mr. John Brown is shut up in it accidentally. Please let him out, and oblige, yours truly,

SETH ATKINS.

"Accidental!" repeated the ex-assistant indignantly. "Why, the confounded scamp locked me in himself, and then ran away. I saw him."

"But why did he come here and leave a note asking us to let you out?"

"Asking you, you mean? The note is addressed to you, not to your housekeeper."

"And where is my housekeeper?"

A search failed to reveal her anywhere about the premises. Miss Graham began to be alarmed.

"You don't think she can have gone suddenly insane and wandered away?" she asked. "She has been queer, and—oh, different, for the last fortnight."

"Different! In what way?"

"In every way. She used to be so good-humored, and talkative, and jolly. I liked her at first sight; that was why I hired her. But of late she has seemed to have something on her mind, some secret. And several times, after I had gone to my room at night, I have heard her go out. Once I asked her where she had been, and she said: 'Oh, just for a walk, to look at the water.' But one can't see much of the water in such

a fog as there was on that particular night. You don't suppose she can be over at the lights, do you?"

"At the lights? With Seth Atkins, the woman hater? Not for any length of time, thank you. But now I remember that Seth has gone—or said he was going—to Eastboro to-day. Under those circumstances she *might* be there. Let's go and see."

She was not there, however, and neither was Seth. Lights, stable, and dwelling were deserted. Miss Graham was really worried.

"What shall I do?" she asked. "Suppose something dreadful has happened to her. I don't know her people at all, or that she has any. I advertised for a housekeeper, and she answered. I liked her letter, and I liked her, so I engaged her. She was a widow living in Hyannis; that is all I know about her."

"Don't worry. Nothing has happened. Hyannis. Humph! Hyannis. Where did I—"

"What are you thinking about?"

"Nothing. It seems to me that some one recently told me something about a person in Hyannis, but I can't remember what it was. Hyannis. She was a widow in Hyannis. Hah! *What?* Why, you don't imagine that—"

He was standing in the middle of the floor, an expression of astonishment, growing suspicion, and incredulous delight on his face.

"What is it?" asked Ruth.

"It can't be that. Oh, no! That would be too gorgeously ridiculous even for a possibility! *It couldn't be!*"

"What is it? Don't be so provocative!"

"Why, it occurred to me that—"

He was interrupted by the jingle of the telephone bell. He stepped briskly to the instrument and took down the receiver.

"Some one for you," he said, an instant later. "I rather imagine it's the mysterious disappearance."

"Emeline, do you mean? How could she telephone or be where there was a— Hello! Yes, this is Miss Graham. Is that you, Emeline? Well, I

wondered— Where on earth are you? What? *What?* Oh, no! You *have?*"

And so on, her ejaculations of astonishment punctuating the discourse of the person at the other end of the wire. Brooks, with difficulty restraining his curiosity, waited with as much patience as he could muster. At last she turned toward him, and beckoned with an agitated finger.

"He wants to speak to you," she said.

"Who?"

"Mr. Atkins."

"Why, I thought you were speaking with Mrs. Bascom."

"I was, but— Oh, don't ask me any questions! I'm beyond thought, to say nothing of words. He will tell you, I suppose."

She handed him the receiver, and sat helplessly down in the rocking-chair. He took his turn at the telephone. When the bell rang again, signifying that the long talk was ended, he walked across the floor, and leaned against the doorpost. He and the girl looked at each other.

"They are married," she gasped. "Actually married!"

"She is the woman he told me about—the one he was engaged to eight years ago!"

"She didn't want to be married with-

out saying a word to me, but he insisted upon it. He was afraid you would object, or, as she says, 'pester' him about it, because of some agreement you and he had. After they were married, he didn't care so much."

"They had planned to go over to Eastboro to-day, and, when I wouldn't go to bed and give him a chance, he locked me up in the boathouse."

"And left the key at the bungalow."

"He says he feels 'sort of mean and Benedict Arnoldy'; but that, after all, I have taken to swimming so considerable of late that he guesses I'll survive. Well, I shall. But the old rascal!"

"I'm dying to hear more about it all. How they made up their quarrel. She says there was a quarrel."

"There was—about a letter. He says the letter, so he has found out, was to her brother-in-law."

"They are coming right home. Then we shall know. And we will have some news of our own to tell them, won't we, dear? Why are you laughing?"

Russell Agnew Brooks, ex-substitute helper and assistant keeper at Eastboro Twin Lights, was leaning against the doorpost, shaking from head to heel.

"Oh, my!" he exclaimed, the tears of merriment running down his cheeks. "I—I— Oh, by George! I'm laughing at woman haters, that's all."



IN MY GARDEN

A COOL, pure scent of dewy things—
Of southernwood and mignonette—
Unto my strife-worn spirit brings
Sweet unguent for its cark and fret.

Of balm-fed air and restful sound
Is wrought a charm beneficent;
With fagot of my cares unbound,
I tarry in its spell, content.

Sequestered for a little space,
That aching heart wounds may be healed—
Then, strong of courage, I can face
Afresh, the world's grim battlefield.

HARRIET WHITNEY DURBIN.

THE PRICE OF OPINION



NO man can believe in himself during the throes of indecision, and there are men to whom self-doubt is not the beginning of wisdom, but the end of achievement. As long as the archdeacon moved among the comfortable landmarks of that level country where decisions can be made by appeal to the conventions, there was nothing to sap his belief in himself. But this new country in which he had strayed in the wake of Mrs. Carson's venturing feet, this country of strange situations and unlooked-for opportunities, presented occasions no conventions would cover; and the archdeacon found himself at every turn wondering what he ought to do, and either not deciding to do it, or blundering when he did.

There was no peace in such living. A hundred times he had made ready to return to the ways of peace, and a hundred times he waited, unable to forego the stimulation of the unforeseen that depended on a man's own wits for handling, and yet hoping each time that the unforeseen would demand of him only those qualities he had developed by strict adherence to the conventional.

By returning to the ways of peace, the archdeacon meant returning to that circle of friends of whom the chief one was Mrs. Morris, where one met women who merely gave checks when they wished to be charitable, and did not, like Mrs. Carson, follow the unfortunate to the source of their trou-

bles, into strange slums, and crowded apartment stores, and night courts, and uncomfortable hospitals. Women to whom Browning meant culture; who made calls, and organized sewing societies, and talked of everyday matters, and were married to excellent husbands, and were careful not to do the unbecoming thing.

The archdeacon was good at explanations, and he had read up on Browning, and he could talk with real interest on everyday matters.

And not one of these things availed him with either Mrs. Carson herself, or the people who surrounded her. Yet because these strange men and women, who painted pictures, and edited magazines, and wrote books, and built bridges, and spoke in the Senate, and organized railroads, tolerated the very thing he represented, the archdeacon found a return to the ways of peace must be paid for. He must forever after reckon with this thing he had learned but lately—boredom.

If he went back, he would be bored—bored by this very peace he clamored for. If he lost the opportunity of going back, he must spend the rest of his life developing his understanding and his resourcefulness—and the task looked hard. It was no wonder that a very devil of indecision tortured the archdeacon, and that even the small events of his clerical occupations began to be significant as they pushed him one way or the other.

He came out into the street from the apartment, where he paid a rent he could not quite afford for comforts he could not quite forego, about eight o'clock in the evening, and found Percy Jeffrey at the door in his motor.

"Were you coming to see me?" asked the archdeacon.

"No, I was on an errand connected with the wedding to-morrow noon. But I shall be glad to take you wherever you are going. Get in!"

The archdeacon named Mrs. Carson's house as his destination, and then, as he saw Jeffrey smiling, he hastily—almost too hastily—inquired after the health of Jeffrey's sister, Mrs. Morris.

"She has a frightful indigestion," said Jeffrey.

As he imparted the information blithely, the archdeacon met it with the silence he opposed to all inconsiderate levity.

"She has had"—and Jeffrey now let concern riot in his voice—"to eat her own words."

"I beg pardon!" said the archdeacon.

"No, don't," said Jeffrey, "and I'll tell you how it happened: Yesterday, Selina"—Selina was Mrs. Morris' Christian name—"telephoned out to Bradport, to Mrs. Cressler Jeffrey, that she positively would not go out to Anita's wedding, even though Anita was her favorite niece, if Mrs. Carson was going. As Mrs. Carson had already said she would go, there seemed nothing to do but to give up Selina's presence at the wedding to-morrow. And then, this morning, I told Selina that it was you, and not Wrexford Thorne, who had been asked to perform the wedding ceremony, and I left her telephoning Cressler's wife that she had changed her mind, and would go. She said she had come to believe her sentiment in the matter was not charitable, and she had decided to go, to prove that she was not governed by the lower things. I offer you my congratulations, archdeacon. It is wonderful that even the mention of your name should remove a woman from the plane of the lower things."

The archdeacon, having no idea at all what answer to make to this narration, held his peace, and Jeffrey stopped the machine at Mrs. Carson's door.

"It would complicate it," said Jeffrey, "if now Mrs. Carson declined to go because of Selina."

"Surely she would not do that!" said the archdeacon anxiously.

But Jeffrey only laughed, and left the archdeacon pausing on the broad marble steps, once more facing the problem of the two great forces that balance the world. On one side the force that keeps men in the path others have trod, urging on them tried compromises; on the other side the force that draws them to unknown ways for the sake of new knowledge.

Why these two forces should be ever at war, the archdeacon could not say. For what Mrs. Morris represented in his life of the conservative he had a deep respect, yet for what Mrs. Carson meant of the insurgent he had a feeling he could not name, and that yet seemed stronger than respect. Why could not a man combine the two? There were surely some men who did.

Yet only a week ago, Mrs. Morris had called this desire of his to make such a combination weakness. She had seriously talked to him about it—using Mrs. Carson as a text. She had told him that the time had come for him to make a choice between them; she had showed him what choosing Mrs. Carson would mean in the world's opinion of him, and in his own character. And she had done it so thoroughly, and so plainly for his own good, and against her desire to intrude, that the archdeacon had been almost wrought up to the point of casting out this devil of indecision that made a purgatory of his vanity.

For the archdeacon was not of humble mind. Mrs. Carson herself had once said that he was designed for a bulwark of the conventional. He was large, and conspicuously broad in build. He was impressive in manner. He spoke with care and weightiness, and in the earlier days, before he had set foot in Mrs. Carson's disconcerting

world, there had seemed small appeal from what he said. This mannerism, joined to his fine forehead and his excellent shoulders, had won him much praise.

There had been a time when the praise had been a spur to him; but, too often repeated, and too easily won, it had become the Delilah to which many a young Samson has sacrificed his strength, and efforts that might have been broad with spiritual significance turned into the sluggish acceptance of social approval, until the consciousness of his excellence tinged the cadence of his voice, and the wave of his hand, and the measure of his tread. If what Mrs. Morris had said to him was true, it was time, indeed, that he ceased standing before Mrs. Carson's door, if only for the sake of that excellence he hoped to preserve.

Yet, as he waited on the doorstep of the great house, with its lights streaming softly from behind silken curtains, the very atmosphere of the place was a pleasure to him. He liked the solemn man who opened the door for him, and took his hat and gloves. He liked the differential way in which he said: "The library, sir."

Only Mrs. Carson's intimates entered her library, and the man's very intonation conferred an honor as he opened the library doors for him, and closed them softly behind him.

The archdeacon believed he liked this library better than any room he had ever been in. Not for its hundreds of books that all looked used, nor its paintings that all told stories, but for its rosy and golden glow; its absence of things that would tumble over easily; its wonderfully comfortable places to sit down, with the lights behind you, and the books before you. He looked about him as he waited, to see if he could tell what Mrs. Carleton Thorne had meant when she said: "Nadine's library where Vibert's paintings wink at Gleyre's."

There was a Galatea, full blown in beauty, just born in innocence. There was no winking there. The "Lost Illusions" over the mantel was too tragic

to wink. Before him hung a wonderfully colored painting of a girl held by a man in a boat, sailing on a sea haunted by beckoning spirits. The girl's face was blind ecstasy itself; the man's brooding fear. The archdeacon looked at it, forgetful of his quest, wondering what it could be about.

There were no pictures to wonder over in Mrs. Morris' drawing-room. She had no library, and her walls were not tellers of tales. There were landscapes, and an Indian or two. There were some mountains, and there was Venice, and a lady on a balcony looking down at tall hollyhocks.

It seemed curious to the archdeacon, as he thought of these things, that he had found no defense of Mrs. Carson to offer to Mrs. Morris when she had importuned him to see clearly the direction he was taking. He had not even had an explanation of it all.

One never had to explain to Mrs. Carson. He could not imagine her forcing choices on a man, or bothering about what anybody else was saying about him. He sighed, and before him came the comfort of life, with a woman to whom explanations were not necessary. He let the thought carry him far, so far it suddenly revealed to him strange things that he had not supposed possible of himself at his present age.

The dignified Rawlins, at the door, unclosed it again, to let Mrs. Carson enter, and before he caught sight of her she had seen the look with which he was regarding the girl whose face glowed with ecstasy and the man haunted by fear.

"What is your explanation of it, archdeacon?" she asked.

"What is its name?" he said.

"Whither." You see, she doesn't care 'whither,' but he—I think he is still burdened with the great masculine conflict."

"What is it?" asked the archdeacon.

"You should be able to tell me better than I you. Look at his Puritan face. I should say it was, with him, the conflict between the thing he ought to like and the thing he likes because he ought not to."

This had the effect of rendering the archdeacon quite dumb, and so Nadine continued:

"I am glad you came promptly, for Judge Wallace, Mrs. Thorne's father, and the manager of the Carson estate, has just telephoned me that I must go over some important papers to-night that he has to use in the case against Harding, my discharged manager, that begins next week. It will take us several hours, I am afraid. He will be here in half an hour. I am going to Anita Jeffrey's wedding to-morrow, and so I must work to-night."

"In that case," said the archdeacon, "I will immediately go into the matter that brought me. This woman whom you gave me the money to help—you recall the one with the scar on her face—she has disappeared."

"I did not see her. You remember I let you manage this affair yourself, but I believe I did caution you against giving her the money outright."

"She seemed to believe," said the archdeacon, "that if she could get a good lawyer to try her case she would be able to return the money. She put it quite clearly. A repudiated marriage under a false name, by a very rich man. A compromise out of court, when they bought her off for the sake of the man's reputation, when he was about to contract a real marriage with a woman in his own class."

"And she thought that she had a chance to prove, after all, that hers was a real marriage?" said Nadine.

"Not unaided, against all the money of the man's family."

"It might be so," said Nadine to him gently, "but it has all the marks of a made-up story. It would have been better to have engaged a lawyer for her than to have given her money to do so. You say she has disappeared?"

"It is curious," said the archdeacon, "since you just spoke of him, that the last time I saw her she was with this Mr. Harding, who used to be your attorney. And then when I went to her place, she had gone. In the house they said she had taken a position for a couple of weeks, with a family in the

country that needed extra help for a house party, and that she would be back."

"Well, then, why do you not wait?"

"You see—you see, I gave her the money—and I was not sure of her coming back. One of the things I came to ask you was if you thought I had better inquire about her from Mr. Harding."

"If you are anxious about her, I should do so. But you cannot rely on what he says. It does not sound, to me, like a truthful story. It is more likely a scheme to get money—from you—and from the man, or his wife—for I suppose there is a wife."

Rawlins appeared hesitatingly at the library door.

"Madam," he said, "I am very sorry to disturb you, but Bradport has telephoned twice, and insists on your being asked if you will speak to them. They say it is important. We have refused several other telephone calls, but they insist."

"Let me have them on the library telephone, Rawlins." She moved to the desk telephone. "It is probably some of the Cressler Jeffreys, wanting me to bring something or somebody out at the last minute to the wedding to-morrow," she said to the archdeacon.

The archdeacon watched her as she sat down, and took off the receiver.

"Yes, this is Mrs. Carson."

He saw her hand suddenly catch the arm of the chair, and her face grow tense.

"And this occurred but two hours ago?" she said.

She waited a moment, and then spoke again:

"But you told me that he tried last week to get away, and that you had left him only his linen clothes, so that he could not repeat it. He cannot go far out of the grounds in white linen—a man his size—as conspicuous as he is—without being found."

She paused again to listen, and then asked about the watching of trains and ferryboats across the Sound to the Long Island shore.

"I should have thought," she said,

"that you would have redoubled your precautions when you knew that somebody was sending him letters through some employee in the house."

There was another silence. The color seemed to have left her face. Then she answered:

"I will call you at ten to-night, and again at twelve, unless you call me. And to-morrow morning I will come out with Judge Wallace, unless you have found him. No, I was coming to Cressler—two miles from Bradport—to-morrow morning, anyhow—to Mr. Cressler Jeffrey's. It is incredible that with all these precautions, he could have arranged to get away without help. Somebody else is in it. I will see what can be done at this end. Judge Wallace will be here in a few minutes, and I will have him talk to you."

She listened to the answer, and then she hung up the receiver. The archdeacon rose, and she started, as if she had quite forgotten him.

"You heard?" she said quietly. "It seems impossible that a man so well watched could get away—unless there was real negligence."

The archdeacon hesitated. He did not like to call this insane man her husband.

"You mean—Mr. Carson?" he asked.

"Yes. Oh, I hope they find him! His very semblance of sanity makes him dangerous. You might meet him on the street, and never guess how a chance offense might rouse him to frightful retaliation. He has the strength of—" She paused over some remembered terror, and shuddered.

"He will be found," said the archdeacon. "An insane man cannot go about as he chooses. At any rate, he will not come here."

"I do not know—he may—there is some plan behind it."

The archdeacon looked about him, and all the charm of the glowing room fled before the atmosphere of this fear. He had a sudden vision of Mrs. Morris' drawing-room, where there was nothing behind which lay a story, not even a picture.

"You will want to make some im-

mediate arrangements," he said. "I will not detain you. Good night."

Rawlins closed the library door after him, and handed him his hat and gloves.

"There has been some woman determined to see Mrs. Carson, sir, that I have just told it was impossible. She is lingering a bit about the steps, sir; but you'll doubtless take no notice of her. We are much bothered by them, sir, since it leaked out that Mrs. Carson liked to help them."

"Very well, Rawlins. Good night."

"Good night, sir."

Rawlins closed the outer door swiftly, and the archdeacon stopped in the vestibule to put on his gloves. As he stood there, he saw a woman at the foot of the steps. He hesitated, and, as he did so, Judge Wallace crossed the street to the Carson steps, and the archdeacon saw the woman turn a face bearing a long scar across the cheek to the judge. In his amazement, the archdeacon took refuge in the only resource his unaccustomed wits left him in this strange country ungoverned by the conventions. He stood still, and was silent.

Then he heard the judge say: "So you have appeared again. What are you doing on Mrs. Carson's steps?"

"I have never called her Mrs. Carson," the girl said sullenly. "The name belongs to me."

The archdeacon felt a thrill of excitement quiver along his nerves, that was quite unlike anything he had ever felt before. A week ago he had given this girl Mrs. Carson's money. He pulled himself together. Judge Wallace was answering her.

"Some very competent lawyers decided otherwise," the judge said curtly.

"Yes—out of court," said the girl. "It is time to see what some judge not quite so competent might decide."

The judge considered this phrase a moment.

"You have evidently been talking the matter over with some lawyer."

"Evidently."

"Well, then, why are you here? Is it blackmail?"

"No, not with her. I have just found out that it has been she who has looked

after my—my sister all summer. I will give value received for anything I ask of her."

"Suppose you come and see me about it to-morrow at my office. I do not think you can see Mrs. Carson to-night."

"I will not be here to-morrow. I've got to go back to the country to-night. I had to come in this afternoon for something special. I cannot stay. I am working in the country."

"What became of the money paid you by Carson, that you should be working in the country?"

"It is gone."

"You want money of Mrs. Carson?"

"I told you I had something to sell. But it takes more time than I have to sell it. I've telephoned, and I've come here, and this very fine lady, who has my place, can't be seen, and can't use the telephone. All right! I can sell it elsewhere, and to a higher bidder."

She left him suddenly, and swung around the corner of the street. But the archdeacon had no idea of letting her escape. He flung himself from the vestibule, where he had been hidden, in a fine haste, that was stopped at the bottom step by the indignant judge.

"Upon my word!" said the judge breathlessly, as he found who it was he held within his grip.

The archdeacon stopped for one of his excellent explanations, and the time in which he might have caught the girl passed.

"I could not very well just walk down on you after you had begun to talk about such things! Why, I gave that girl money of Mrs. Carson's only last week! W-what d-did she mean?" The archdeacon stammered in his excitement.

"You heard her," said the judge, with an accent that, in a calmer time, would have been exceedingly disagreeable to the archdeacon.

"Is there—is there—any chance——"

"The chance of a lively scandal—that's all."

"This girl is not—not really—his wife?"

"She has not proved it."

"Could she?"

"Not likely," answered the judge. "Good night."

The judge passed into the house. The archdeacon heard Rawlins, at the door, say: "The library, sir," in the same deferential tones that had been used for himself. He heard the door close again, but he still stood on the steps, his mind peopled with unwonted guests that searched for room and clamored for recognition. Verily, the safe and level country of convention was far off from him, and he walked hand in hand with an insurgent force that knew nothing of the conservative.

Suppose — suppose this appealing woman behind the door that had just shut him out—this woman with the low voice, and the haunting blue eyes, and the slender, soft body, and the wonderful understanding, should after all—could—marry! The archdeacon moved slowly down the street, gripped by this thought; stirred by it to depths he had had no knowledge of; swung high on the crest of this wave of insurgence; grasping at large things that all his life had been denied him.

And then, down he went into the trough of the wave, and from the shore of the level land he had deserted the conventions giped at him. Before she could marry, there would be a lively scandal, indeed! The city and the country would ring with it. What could he have to do with such things? He was—a priest—and a gentleman! His ways were far from these. And all this money that made her such a power—what would happen to it? The archdeacon sighed. Was there no way for a man to be rid of this devil of indecision?

When the archdeacon found, the next morning, that he had missed the only morning train that stopped at Cressler, the Jeffreys' country place, across the bay from Belle Terre, and two miles from Bradport, he called it luck. As a matter of fact, it was absorption; for even after a night's sleep, he was still weighing balances and measuring possibilities.

Whatever the name of the thing that

had caused him to miss his trains, its result was not pleasant. He had to telephone to Cressler to ask what could be done, for the next train would bring him there ten minutes later than the time set for the ceremony he was to perform, without counting the necessity to dress.

Mrs. Morris, relieving Mrs. Jeffrey of all outside matters, received his message, and there was a brief consultation while he held the wire. Then Mrs. Morris, in a voice that the archdeacon felt quiver down his spine, bade him telephone Mrs. Carson, whose machine was going to make a record run to enable Doctor Carleton Thorne to accompany his wife to the wedding at the last moment.

"Is Mrs. Carson going to the wedding?" asked the archdeacon, in his surprise.

"She is expected," said Mrs. Morris sharply. "But perhaps you have later information of her plans than anybody else!"

"Not at all!" said the archdeacon hastily, but even as he answered, the sound of a hung-up receiver clicked over the wire.

The archdeacon sat in the telephone booth at the station, and pondered. It was not agreeable to him to intrude on this party going out to Bradport in Mrs. Carson's machine. Mrs. Carson was probably relieved of anxiety on her husband's account, and therefore found no need to change her plans, or else she was going to the wedding because she had to go to Bradport, anyhow, and a wedding would fill in the period of her waiting as well as anything else.

Mrs. Thorne, who took his message to Mrs. Carson over the telephone, and brought him her answer, told him that Mr. Carson had not been found, but that they were sure he must be in the neighborhood, as the trains had all been watched, and he had not left, either that way, or by boat. She concluded briefly that they would stop at the station for the archdeacon in a few minutes.

Mrs. Carson was also late, and the run into Connecticut was, indeed, a rec-

ord one. The archdeacon feared for his neck, as he sat beside Judge Wallace on the small folding seats of the car. He ate and breathed dust; he could talk not at all, and listen only now and then, and he arrived a scant half hour before the hour of the ceremony, breathless and dusty beyond description.

Judge Wallace went on alone to the sanitarium. The rest of them were hastily assigned to rooms at the back of the house, and there the archdeacon's badly begun day grew worse. For he found that his room had no bath of its own, and that he would have to traverse a long hall, and turn a corner into a short hall, before he could find a tub to remove the unspeakable dust of that frightful ride.

He had been invited, with the house guests, to stay overnight. He unpacked his grip of fresh linen, laid his long, black cassock, and his crisp, white surplice on the bed. Beside it he put the white-silk stole Mrs. Morris had given him for Christmas. Then he got into his bath robe, and carefully brushed the dust off his frock coat and his trousers that were white with it. He put his head out into the hall. It was empty, and so he hurried through the long hall, and round the corner into the short hall.

Tubbed and refreshed, the archdeacon returned in haste round the corner, and up the long hall. Halfway there a door suddenly opened, and Mrs. Morris, dressed for the wedding, with absolute precision, but nervous in manner, appeared, nearly upsetting the archdeacon.

"You!" she gasped.

The archdeacon noted, with surprise, how much more attractive the lady was a trifle distraught than entirely placid. Then he recalled his bath robe, and, with a "How do you do, Mrs. Morris?" he prepared to flee.

But the lady detained him.

"I have seen the oddest thing," she said. "All these rooms in the back open onto this upstairs veranda. You see how the house is built close to the hill in the back, so that the woods are nearly

level with the veranda at the second floor. While I was dressing, one of the maids came out of a window to the porch, and spoke to somebody in the woods. Do you think the presents ought to be watched?"

"It is some household matter. I think I would not bother until after the wedding is over. A wedding ought to go smoothly. You must excuse me, I have barely time to get ready. I had a frightful ride out."

Mrs. Morris smiled at this intelligence. Across the hall from his own room, they both heard Mrs. Thorne's offer to Mrs. Carson to hook her gown. Mrs. Morris paused a moment to notice the fact of the easily heard voice, and to watch the archdeacon cover the space between her and his own room with a speed she had not believed possible for so large a figure. Then she passed on down the hall.

The archdeacon locked his door, and hastily began his toilet. He had exactly ten minutes left. And then a curious thing befell. On the chair where he had left his carefully folded trousers there were no trousers.

The archdeacon stared at the chair. He looked at the bed, where his cassock lay, and then his eyes came back to the chair. He recalled distinctly that he had put them on the chair—carefully, because he had not brought other clothes with him for the one night's stay. He looked all over the room, leisurely, at first, and then, as the minutes passed, and he heard, below, the murmur of assembling guests, and the music that precedes the wedding march, he looked hastily, and finally with panic. He looked as a man will when he is in a hurry—twice in the same place—and in places where no sane man would put his only pair of trousers.

He kept on looking long after he was sure that they were not there, and it was not until he stood desperately in the middle of the room, his forehead bedewed with perspiration, his eyes still searching the room, that he remembered that his watch and his wallet were in the trousers.

Meantime, a hasty step echoed in the

hallway, and Percy Jeffrey rapped at his door.

"They are all ready, and waiting for you, archdeacon," said Percy. "Hurry! The procession is forming. Mrs. Jeffrey sent me to see if I could help you."

The archdeacon unlocked his door, and Jeffrey beheld him in amazement.

"Man alive! The bride is at the top of the stairway, waiting to go down! And you in your bath robe!"

"I have lost my pantaloons!" said the archdeacon, in tones that would have moved anybody but Percy Jeffrey.

"You've lost your pantaloons!" echoed Percy. "Why, how can a man lose his pantaloons?"

"Well, I've lost mine."

"For Heaven's sake, put on another pair, then! They are playing the bridal music!"

"I haven't any other pair!" The archdeacon's mind was utterly unable to cope with so unheard-of a situation. He gazed blankly at Percy Jeffrey.

"I only wore one pair out," he explained patiently.

"Oh!" said Percy. He measured him with his eyes.

He himself was tall, but not that tall, and he was so much slimmer that his own clothes would be impossible for the archdeacon, whose waist had long ago disappeared. Moreover, Percy did not believe there was a man in the house, even among the servants, whose clothes would fit the archdeacon.

"But I'll try," he said, hurrying out.

And then more footsteps came down the hallway. Cressler Jeffrey, the father of the bride, with Mrs. Morris half the hallway behind him. Jeffrey came into the room.

"Anita is getting really upset, archdeacon, and it is a shame to worry her. Everybody is waiting. What is the matter?"

"The matter!" said the archdeacon. "The matter is that I have lost my trousers."

"Lost your trousers!"

"My trousers—yes—my trousers!" said the archdeacon.

"Well, by gad!" said Cressler Jeffrey. "What a thing to lose!"

He gazed on the archdeacon with dismay.

"Where did you lose them?"

"Right here in this room!" burst forth the archdeacon, his patience finally giving way.

As this conversation occurred at the open door, the archdeacon's eye lit suddenly on Mrs. Carson, standing in her own doorway, across the hall, clutching at Mrs. Thorne with a look that the closing of his own door by Cressler Jeffrey, preparatory to an immediate search of the room, prevented him from realizing.

"Oh," said Amy Thorne, "we might have taken more time! My, but the Jeffreys will be angry! To be all ready on time for a wedding, to have the guests waiting, and the music at the march, and the thing held up because the rector has lost—"

Mrs. Morris reached them.

"What is the matter?" said Mrs. Morris breathlessly.

Mrs. Carson gave the lady a level look.

"Do you think you can stand it?" she asked softly.

Mrs. Morris ignored her.

"Mrs. Thorne," she said, "can you tell me what causes this unheard-of delay?"

"The archdeacon— You tell her, Nadine."

"The archdeacon," said Mrs. Carson gravely, "has lost his trousers."

"Lost his—"

Mrs. Morris could not quite manage it. She filled her pause with infinite dismay. This was superseded with cold respectability itself. Was a gentleman's apparel to be discussed by ladies? Yet at the stairway stood the bride and her maids, waiting the signal. Mrs. Morris lost her head.

"How could you know such a thing?" she demanded of Mrs. Carson.

"How could you fail to know it?" countered Mrs. Carson.

Amy Thorne came between them.

"He has been telling it loud enough to hear it in any of these rooms about him, Mrs. Morris."

"But where, Mrs. Thorne, did he lose—a—them?"

"In his own room—just now."

Mrs. Carson looked out the hall window at the veranda and the woods beyond.

"Some woman ought to help those men in there," she said. "Men can never find things. They are very likely right there, and they do not see them."

"I will get Mrs. Cressler Jeffrey," said Mrs. Morris, sweeping away from them down the hall.

"Nadine!" said Amy. "A little thing like the huge archdeacon's trousers—and overlooked."

"She overlooked—a—them," mimicked Mrs. Carson.

Percy Jeffrey came toward them with young Tom, his cousin. Both men had their arms full of trousers. Percy's face, as he turned it to the two women, bore a shameless grin. He shook his head.

"We are all too thin," he said sadly. "Poor Anita!"

They closed the archdeacon's door behind them.

"I think we shall have to go on, Amy," said Mrs. Carson, "or we shall seem to spy. I will go to the upstairs telephone, in the sewing room, and see what news they have for me from the sanitarium, and then join you and Carleton downstairs. There will be time evidently."

They met Mrs. Cressler Jeffrey hurrying to the archdeacon's room, as they left the hall. She was flushed and angry. This wedding represented days of patient preparation, and months of thought. It was a shame that its smoothness should be upset by such a thing. She bore down on the archdeacon's room with the anger of the outraged hostess, and her husband opened the door to her knock.

The archdeacon, still in his bath robe, stood despairingly before a bed covered with trousers—black ones, gray ones, striped, and checked trousers—and not one pair would so much as go on him.

Cressler Jeffrey was still explaining volubly that trousers could not disappear from a man's room in that fash-

ion. The archdeacon's wrath was rising.

"They never did before, in any house that I have ever been in but yours, Mr. Jeffrey," said the archdeacon angrily, as Mrs. Jeffrey entered. "There is a thief here at this wedding."

"It won't be a wedding if you don't hurry," said Mrs. Jeffrey hastily.

"What would a thief want with your trousers?" said Cressler Jeffrey.

"My wallet was in the back pocket that buttons. He probably did not want to take time to take it out."

"But, archdeacon," said the distracted mother, "can you not put on *something*? The musicians have played the bridal chorus twice. Nobody will notice you."

"In that case, he might as well go in his bath robe," said Percy glibly.

His sister-in-law gave him a withering look.

"It is plain," she said, "that you have never been a mother!"

Percy, agreeing with her, held his peace, and Mrs. Jeffrey turned again to the stricken priest.

"Your cassock, archdeacon! With your cassock on, it does not matter if——" The mother of the bride paused.

The three men took long breaths of relief. The archdeacon gave his hostess a distracted look.

"Sure!" said Cressler Jeffrey. "Sure thing! What's all this fuss about, anyhow? I never thought of his uniform. Good for you, Anita! It takes a woman for such things. Come on, archdeacon! Get out, Anita! We'll have him down in no time. The thing buttons clear down to your ankles, don't it? Well, then!"

Downstairs in the drawing-room with its marriage bell and its prie-dieu, its roses and its waiting guests, Mrs. Carson joined Mrs. Thorne and the doctor. Behind her, Mrs. Morris shifted her position slightly.

Mrs. Carson shook her head at Mrs. Thorne's question.

"Nothing. Your father is on his way back here. What of the archdeacon?"

"Nothing. Carleton hates weddings,

but he says that the archdeacon has saved the day for him."

"It is not often that anybody but the bride is interesting. There goes the march. He must have found them."

Presently from the back hall the bridegroom and his best man, preceded by the archdeacon, entered the drawing-room, and made their way to the prie-dieu and the bell of roses.

"What do you think?" whispered Amy Thorne, as the music swelled for the entrance of the bride, misty-veiled and anxious-eyed.

"I think that Monna Vanna and her long mantle were not a circumstance," said Nadine.

"Percy," said Mrs. Morris to her brother, as the long line filed before the bride and bridegroom to offer their congratulations, "who was Monna Vanna?"

"She was the lady who saved her city by wearing a long coat," said Percy.

"What had the long coat to do with it?"

Percy gave his sister a quick look, and lowered his voice to mystery.

"Nobody knows for sure. It was supposed to be all she wore—but not even Maeterlinck, who told the story, knew—for she did not take it off."

"That," said Mrs. Morris, with triumphant disgust, "is what Mrs. Carson called the archdeacon!"

"Oh, by Jove!" said Percy.

The archdeacon returned to his room. He was frightfully warm, and he did not recall ever having been so angry. He had all but fallen over the foolish white footstool under the more foolish white rose bell, and, as he had saved himself by a hasty clutch at the bridegroom's arm, he had caught Carleton Thorne's eye, and the remembrance of it increased his anger. Moreover, it was one o'clock, and he had not eaten since seven. His food was more than important to him—it was a necessity.

But he had either to go to the wedding breakfast in his cassock, which would be so conspicuous as to necessitate explanations, or he had to eat in

his room, or go without—and none of these contingencies appealed to him. Explanations came easily to him, but none that would successfully cover this case. He did not feel that he could go much longer without food. And downstairs was a gay wedding party that any man interested in social matters would have enjoyed. It had, indeed, been an evil day for him.

Percy Jeffrey broke his reflections at this point.

"Archdeacon, I am sent to demand your presence at the feast. What makes you skulk in your tent like this? We have been looking for you every place."

The archdeacon had removed his surplice. He looked at himself in the glass.

"I do not like to come down in my cassock," he said.

"It looks very well on you. And nobody could tell—"

The archdeacon's face lightened.

"Do you mean to say that nobody knows?"

But, much as he would like to have said it, Percy could not quite manage it.

"Very well," said the archdeacon, with dignity. "I shall stay here."

"But you cannot stay here forever!"

"I can stay until I get a pair of pantaloons," said the badgered priest. "Unless somebody else is in a hurry to be married."

"Very well; I will have your portion of the wedding cake sent up," said Percy.

As he left the room, the archdeacon considered who could be sent to his apartment for his clothes. Even his keys had been in the missing trousers. The janitor would have to get them. The room was very warm, and very lonely. The guests were feasting far off in the front of the house; yet, as the archdeacon opened his door to get more air, he could hear a distracting murmur of laughter and music rise faintly, mocking at his predicament. His anger waxed.

He turned to go back into his room, and, as he did so, he caught sight of something curious about Mrs. Carson's door. It was open about two inches,

and watching him through the crack were a pair of shifting, nervous eyes. The eyes were far up the door. They belonged to a tall man.

The archdeacon stared. The perspiration once more bathed his forehead. If this was the thief, he ought to rouse the house. And where else would a thief go, if he came informed—and he had heard that they did—but to the room of the wealthiest guest, the guest whose jewels were famous? And he would go there just at the time when everybody else in the house, guests and servants, were engaged with the wedding breakfast.

Yet if he roused the house the poor bride's wedding breakfast was spoiled. Dimly the archdeacon felt he had already done enough to disturb the smoothness of the wedding. Long habits of ineptitude in the face of the unexpected seized him. The archdeacon stood still, looking at the nervous, shifting eyes.

The door opened a little wider. And then, as the door opened, the archdeacon caught sudden sight of his own trousers on the man's long legs—his trousers belted in folds around a slimmer waist than his own.

And all the wrath that had been growing within the archdeacon blazed into a white-hot flame; all the discomfort and distress of the last hour culminated in one mad spring of primal rage upon this creature in the doorway, that had brought him to this pass. And as he sprang on him, something queer happened to the face at the door. The upper lip was drawn back over teeth slightly flecked with blood, and sounds like the snarling of an angry dog lashed the air.

The door swung wide, and, even as he grappled with the man, the archdeacon saw the door shut them both in the room, and heard a key click in the lock. He had no chance to look, for long fingers, with the knuckles gnawed and bleeding, were tugging at his throat, and the snarling went on; yet the archdeacon knew somebody else was in the room, and knew it was a woman.

Struggling as he was, every muscle

defending the very citadels of his life, as those long fingers pressed his throat, the archdeacon found time to wonder if it was Mrs. Carson herself who was there behind him. Then, as those strangling hands grew closer, he heard the woman cry:

"It's a priest, Collie. Don't kill him! It's a priest! No good luck will ever come to you if you harm him. Can't you see his gown? It's a priest, I tell you! You shan't kill him!"

And the last thought the archdeacon had, as darkness came on him, was that it was not Mrs. Carson. It was the woman to whom he had given Mrs. Carson's money; the woman who had stood upon her steps last night; the woman who had called herself—why, she had called herself Mrs. Carson!

The bride and bridegroom, powdered with rice and rose leaves, escaped on the early train to New York. Judge Wallace had returned from the sanitarium, and was ready to take Mrs. Carson to interview the doctor there. She paused at the stairway to ask Mrs. Thorne to come up with her to help change her gown. She had not brought her maid.

"What," said Mrs. Thorne, "has become of the archdeacon?"

"He would not come to the wedding breakfast in his cassock," said Percy Jeffrey. "So it was served in his room, and I dare say he is up there now. With a bride to get off, and a tearful mother about, and with Selina stewing—there comes Selina now, and I'll lay any wager she asks the same thing."

Mrs. Carson and Amy Thorne did not wait. But as they turned the corner of the stairway, they heard Percy assuring his sister that the archdeacon had been fed, and was at that moment cutting a new suit out of his old cassock, and that if she really wanted to help the poor man, she had better get her thimble, and organize a sewing society.

Percy was still expounding the excellencies of this idea to a very indignant sister when Cressler Jeffrey came down the stairs to him.

"Cress, has the archdeacon got his new suit done?" said Percy.

"Mrs. Carson," said Cressler Jeffrey, "cannot open her door." It is locked from the inside. She is positive she did not lock it. I knocked on the archdeacon's door, across the hall, to get him to help me force the door—he is so large—but he is not in his room. His luncheon is on a tray, untouched."

"You don't suppose, Selina," said Percy, "that the archdeacon has locked himself in Mrs. Carson's room?"

"Percy!" gasped Mrs. Morris, her carefully tinted face suffused with real color. "There are times when I wonder if you really are my brother."

"I wonder," said Percy gayly, "if they are the same times that I am also in doubt?"

"Percy, let Selina alone for a minute, and you and Doctor Thorne come upstairs with me, and see what ails Mrs. Carson's door."

"Oh, she probably locked it, and forgot," said Percy.

"The key is on the inside," said Cressler Jeffrey.

The three men looked at each other.

"You can go out of the hall window onto the veranda and into Mrs. Carson's window," said Cressler Jeffrey. "One of us can stay at the door in the hall, and the other——"

"I'll go through the window, and unlock the door for Mrs. Carson," said Carleton Thorne. "Why didn't you say so at first? That's no trouble."

"I will go with you," said Percy.

"And I will go up with Cressler, and wait in the hall," said Mrs. Morris.

"Well," said Percy, "with one lost archdeacon, and one lost archdeacon's trousers, this is the most exciting wedding I ever attended. If the archdeacon is lost on Mrs. Carson's account, Selina will lose her mind."

In the upstairs hall, Mrs. Carson and Amy Thorne were joined by Cressler Jeffrey and Mrs. Morris. They heard the other men cross the tin floor of the veranda. The window must have been open, for there was no sound of raising it. Then there was a long pause.

Cressler Jeffrey knocked on the door,

his impatience losing bounds. Steps crossed the floor, and Percy unlocked the door.

Carleton Thorne was bending over a figure on the floor, from the head of which he had drawn Mrs. Carson's long, blue silk motor coat.

"Keep out, all of you," he said. "He needs air. Mrs. Carson, you and Amy come in. Amy, get me water. Cressler, find me some brandy, will you?"

"It is the archdeacon!" said Mrs. Morris, but her eyes fixed themselves on Mrs. Carson, and not on the face on the floor, with the dark print of fingers on its throat.

"Percy," said the doctor, loosening the clerical collar, "take your sister out, and close the door."

Percy had to use main force to close the door. He did it quietly, but with entire efficiency.

"You have no right to treat me so," said Mrs. Morris. "I have a right to know about this."

"Can't you see there has been some kind of a fight?"

"But the door was locked from the inside."

"The man may be killed. I'd advise you to go to your own room. There is no use in your attracting the other guests."

Cressler Jeffrey returned with brandy, gave it to the doctor, and came out to look over the archdeacon's room.

Mrs. Carson took the brandy, and bathed the archdeacon's forehead with it. The doctor at length succeeded in forcing a little down his throat. Presently he sighed, with a long, labored breath. And as the doctor went on with his work, mumbled words rose to the archdeacon's lips. The doctor gave him more brandy, and his mind took up the thread where it had laid it down.

"It is the woman with the scar on her face, that I tried to help with money. It is the woman who said she was Mrs. Carson; the woman who said our Mrs. Carson was not a real wife."

Mrs. Carson drew back, with startled eyes on Doctor Thorne. He shook his head at her. Dimly the archdeacon perceived denial in the movement.

"It was!" he reiterated, using his tongue with difficulty, but with persistence. "It was the woman talking to Judge Wallace on the steps last night. The woman who said she was Mrs. Carson. And if she is Mrs. Carson, our Mrs. Carson is not married. She may marry somebody else if she likes."

No particle of color was left in Nadine's face. She stepped back, with a long look at Amy Thorne—a look that for one mad moment caught at the hope of a great release.

Doctor Thorne roused the archdeacon farther.

"She was here with him," said the archdeacon, with dazed eyes on the doctor. "She called him Collie, like a dog, and he snarled like a dog."

"Ah!" The sound came on a long-drawn note from Nadine.

"Like a dog—and he had my trousers on!"

"My husband!" said Nadine.

"He is not your husband," said the archdeacon. "The woman said he was not."

"Amy," said Carleton Thorne, "ask your father to come up at once. Now, archdeacon, head up. Can you sit up? Try! Mrs. Carson, will you see if Cressler is there to help get him in a chair?"

Cressler Jeffrey entered, and, for the first time, they gave the room their attention.

"The police, do you think, doctor?"

"I think not, Cress. My wife has gone for Judge Wallace. In a moment the archdeacon will be able to tell us about it—more rationally. Steady now, archdeacon. Put your head so. Now, rest a moment."

Amy entered with her father. Doctor Thorne spoke to him rapidly:

"Somebody has attacked and choked the archdeacon. He speaks of a man with a woman; a woman talking with you last night—on the steps. Was there such a woman?"

The judge gave Nadine a swift glance.

"Yes," he said. "And I recall she said she had to go back into the country, where she was working."

"Did you take on a new girl, Cressler?"

"We took on several for the wedding, but doubtless they had recommendations. Anita can tell you."

"She called the man with her Collie," said the archdeacon. "Like a dog, and he snarled like a dog. He had on my trousers."

Cressler Jeffrey went out on the veranda to examine it. The judge spoke to the archdeacon:

"Can you remember anything else about the man?"

"He had the strength of an ox, and his teeth had blood on them. His hand was bleeding."

"It was Colin!" said Nadine faintly.

"How could he get in here?" said Carleton Thorne.

Cressler Jeffrey returned.

"There are footsteps in the earth on the side of the hill. Somebody has jumped from the veranda to the hill. You see, they are nearly level there, and the trees grow close to the edge. It could be done without attracting attention on this side of the house."

"I have just come from the sanitarium," said the judge. "The doctors there think that somebody has been getting letters to Mr. Carson through the help of some one of the attendants, and that he received help from the outside. For when he left he had only the linen uniform that they use for such cases, and, with the care with which they have scoured the country, he could not have gone far without being seen. It looks as if the girl was waiting for him there. This is the last place where the searchers would have looked—a household on intimate terms with his wife, and a houseful of wedding guests."

"The cleverest of all places to hide him," said the doctor. "With the excellent chance of obtaining less conspicuous clothes for him, and of escape during the wedding breakfast. How long a start have they had?"

"About an hour surely," said Cressler Jeffrey. "What will you do?"

"I will telephone the sanitarium at once," said the judge.

"This girl," Nadine's voice came cold-

ly, "is she clever enough to plan a thing like this?"

"Its cleverness may have been mere chance, Mrs. Carson," said the judge.

Nadine turned suddenly on the archdeacon:

"Is this the girl you told me of last night?"

"Yes."

"You said last night that you had seen her talking with Harding, my discharged manager—when was it, last week?"

"I cannot remember how long ago, but I saw her."

Nadine's eyes met the judge's.

"I will go with you to the telephone," she said.

Out in the hall, they faced each other. The woman's face had whitened until it seemed as if agony itself looked forth from it. She shut her eyes a moment with a long breath. Then she spoke:

"This woman—is there any hope—any small hope—of this story being true?"

"Any hope! Do you want to believe it? Do you call it hope to find yourself no wife? Do you wish to sacrifice yourself—your position—this money?"

"Yes!" she said, and in her voice lay stirring depths. "Yes, yes, yes!"

The judge was silent, searching his memory, trying to look at the other side of this matter he had always looked on in but one way.

"There is a chance," he said at length.

"Ah!" The sound was almost a moan. "Why have you kept such a chance from me for a day, or an hour?"

"It is incredible that you should want it. I do not know if the matter can be so twisted. It was settled long ago. It is—only the faintest of chances, and perhaps after you have thought it over, after you are quieter, you will not wish for such an outcome—of—so—ordinary an affair."

"Do you think I have not searched for escape all these years, longed for it, dreamed of it? Wish for such an outcome! Every fiber, every brain cell, cries out for it. Not to be this man's wife—to leave his frightful money, and

all these things that tie me to this barren life I lead—to put it all behind me—to go out alone—belonging to myself—owing him nothing—rid of the burden and the responsibility of this power thrust into my hands with so much misery. Oh, you must help me to do it! You must help me to my chance of life! Try to see it with my eyes!"

"I would, indeed, be no man if I did not try to think every day of some way to help you, who have given me back my strength, and my health, and my chance to reënter my own world. If this is the thing you want—if you come to me, not to-morrow, or the next day, but after a week or two of measuring all that it will mean to you of loss, loss not only of money, but of position—and if you still want it I will do my best for you. And now I must do two things: I must find these two—the girl and the man; and I must ask the archdeacon to keep quiet about the girl."

As he spoke, Carleton Thorne opened the door to help the archdeacon into his own room.

"I suppose," said the archdeacon, on a note of explanation, "that mine were the only ones in the house that would fit him. He is so tall."

Down the hallway came Mrs. Morris with Mrs. Cressler Jeffrey. Mrs. Morris looked at the archdeacon on Doctor Thorne's arm, and her voice rose in inquiry:

"Are you all right again, archdeacon? Is he all right, doctor?"

"He will be soon, Mrs. Morris."

"But how, archdeacon, did you get into Mrs. Carson's room?"

Mrs. Morris' voice held anxiety, demanded an answer.

The archdeacon sent his still-dazed eye from Mrs. Morris, fair and promising, to Mrs. Carson, white and shrinking. He looked down at the marks of his fight on his hands and his torn clothes, he thought of the man who snarled like a dog, and of the woman with the scar on her face, and of what she signified; and then boldly, for all his haziness, the archdeacon cast out the devil of indecision that had dwelt with him so long. Valiantly he made his choice—the stranger woman and the insurgent ranks; the chance, and not the security.

"I went for the man who had my trousers," said the archdeacon. "And, if Mrs. Carson does not mind, why should you?"



THE LONG RUN

THE things that we find at our hand, though dear,
Don't count so much in the long, long run,
As the things we work for, year by year,
And patiently gather, one by one.

For though we learn, as we may with pain,
That the thing desired—when all is done—
Is scarce worth while, still the truth is plain;
'Tis our work that counts in the long, long run.

ALICE E. ALLEN.



AT night the Golden Eagle was the center of attraction at Crazy Mule Gulch, for its roof of corrugated galvanized iron covered a shrine of Bacchus, a temple of Fortune, and a hall of Terpsichore. On occasion it was also the judicial chamber of Judge Lynch, and once a week—snow and weather in the pass permitting—the contents of the mail bag from Copperhead Junction were distributed over the bar by Tim Murphy, the proprietor.

Tim was not a regularly appointed official of Uncle Sam. Crazy Mule was too recent a speck on the map to have gained recognition by the post-office department; but the reasons for the selection of the Golden Eagle were so obvious that there was no hesitation in choosing it for the temporary post office. If a man received bad news, he need only make a sign to have liquid consolation set in front of him; if his letters contained glad tidings, there was an abundance of celebration material close at hand, and plenty of good company always ready and willing to join in the consequent festivities.

Also, there was a great deal of mutual forbearance exercised at the Golden Eagle. Tim never questioned the names which his customers gave, although they did not always correspond with those on the envelopes of the let-

ters which they claimed, and they were equally trusting in accepting the contents of the bottles ranged behind the bar as the particular brands called for by the labels, while it was a matter of common knowledge that they were all filled from the same barrel in the shack at the rear.

As a matter of fact, the duties of his volunteer office were not onerous; for comparatively few of the miners received so much as a souvenir post card in the course of a month; and his remuneration was ample, the receipts of the bar being invariably materially increased on mail night. The entire camp turned out, for while many of its inhabitants never received mail, there was always the chance of something happening, and the evening distractions at Crazy Mule were not so varied that any one could take a gamble on missing anything in the way of excitement.

That particular evening when the mail arrived, after a delay of two days, owing to a slide in the pass, was a record breaker in the camp annals; for the old man whose taciturnity had gained for him the sobriquet of "Silent Pete" was moved by the receipt of his first letter to break into speech.

"Boys, I wants yer attention fer a minute," he said, in a voice which, in spite of long disuse, rose loud and clear above the hum of conversation, the clinking of glasses, and the strumming

of the Mexican orchestra from the adjacent dance hall. "This here letter was wrote to me to give due an' sufficient notice about a young feller that's comin' here, an' askin' me to look out fer him; which same I purposes to do. He's a tenderfoot, boys, an' unwise to th' gentle ways an' customs appertainin' to Crazy Mule Gulch. I'm not askin' no favors of no one; but I'm standin' pat fer a square deal fer him. There's no offense intended, an' I'm not makin' no references to insinuations; but th' kid has got a clean record, an' he's wearin' his own name. I reckon that'll be about all; exceptin' th' customary formalities an' procedure of lickerin' up. It's on me, boys!"

Crazy Mule Gulch was not sensitive; in a community where a large-calibered revolver is a part of every gentleman's attire it is not well to take exception to trifles, and the cordiality of the closing invitation made the amende honorable for any possible offense in the body of the speech, which had been received in amazed silence.

Pete, as his nickname implied, was a silent man; but Crazy Mule Gulch knew that it was not always the loudest talker who was quickest on the draw, and even if his talk had been blunt it was not the etiquette of the Golden Eagle to be backward in accepting an invitation to drink.

"Pete, I don't reckon that any of th' gents here present would stack th' cards on th' kid, an' I'm backin' your play to see that he gets a square run fer his money until he cuts his eyeteeth," volunteered Handsome Harry, breaking a silence which, for just an instant, had grown awkward. "Here's my hand on it, old-timer."

The hand which he offered bore none of the traces of manual toil evinced by the others which were being extended to grasp the glasses on the long bar. It was strong and sinewy; but white, and well cared for, suggesting in that community a greater familiarity with cards and chips than acquaintance with pick and shovel. Pete took it cordially in his own calloused palm, nodding a silent acknowledgment, which, in small

measure, conveyed the real gratification which he felt; for Harry's influence over his fellows was great.

He was the most successful man in the camp, the owner of the richest claim, the tacitly acknowledged leader in all affairs affecting the common interest. He was a steady patron of the gambling tables; but a gambler by instinct, not by profession; a successful one, because whatever he did he did thoroughly and well. Two inches above six feet, broad of shoulder, and erect of carriage, he was good to look at, and Crazy Mule Gulch had found that he was a square man of his word, a steadfast friend, and a bad enemy.

To receive such a pledge from him was greater luck than Pete had looked for when he ventured on a plea so unusual in a mining camp, where every man must stand or fall on his own merits.

Two weeks later, when the boy for whom he had demanded fair play arrived, he was doubly grateful, for the young fellow was instinctively attracted to the man who greeted him with the frank cordiality of the West, and who typified for him all that he had imagined of that Golden West's possibilities for success.

Harry, too, seemed to like the boy on sight, and, with a half-laughing, half-serious injunction that he should profit by his respect, rather than follow his example, took him tacitly under his protection. Not that "The Kid," as he was at once dubbed, needed any particular protection against the ordinary temptations of the camp. No one would be foolish enough to attempt to unload a salted claim on a protégé of Silent Pete, and he was too fresh from the softer influences of civilization to find the hard-faced sirens of the Golden Eagle dance hall attractive.

Drinking, as it was practiced in Crazy Mule, was hardly a vice, and the consumption of the whisky which Tim provided was not alluring to him; but that same spirit of unrest which had prompted him to close out his small business in the little Pennsylvania town to seek a shorter, if more hazardous,

path to fortune in a mining camp, led him irresistibly to the vicinity of the gaming tables, where fortunes were won and lost in a night.

To that danger, Silent Pete was oblivious; for, wearied by long hours of labor on a not too profitable claim, he was not given to late hours at the Golden Eagle; but Harry, knowing so well himself the fascination of the game, was quick to recognize the premonitory symptoms of the gambling fever in the Kid's eager, youthful eyes.

"In th' long run, it's a losin' proposition, Kid, even if you quit ahead of th' game," he said gravely, as they walked away from the Golden Eagle, after a long session at the poker table, where the boy had been an envious spectator; a session which had considerably fattened Harry's own bag of dust at the expense of four less skillful players. "Prospectin' is a gamble, of course; but it's a heap safer an' cleaner one than poker. Stick to yer pick an' shovel; if you strike it rich, your pile is made without hurtin' any one else; an' if you never pan out pay dirt, you've at least got a clean taste in your mouth at th' end of th' trail, Kid—an' that's more than you'd wake up with after a losin' session at th' gamblin' table. How about that claim you staked on Lame Injun? Pete allowed it promised big."

"It was a false promise, then," answered the Kid disconsolately. "Just another blamed pocket, I reckon; at any rate, it petered out before we cleaned up ten per cent. of what you raked in on that last jack pot. See here, Harry: I'm not a quitter; but that mining game isn't what I expected. I've got to make good, and do it quick, at that."

They had reached the door of Harry's cabin, and the older man paused for a minute, looking at the weak face of the boy in the moonlight.

"Come in, Kid," he said slowly. "I reckon that Chink of mine can rustle somethin' fer us to eat, an' I'm thirsty for somethin' to take the taste of Tim's double-distilled embalm'n' fluid out of my mouth."

In spite of the lateness of the hour, the boy accepted the invitation eagerly. Harry's cabin was by far the most pretentious and comfortable in Crazy Mule, and Sing Long, his Chinese servant, prepared dishes unknown to the simple menu of the table in Silent Pete's shack.

"So you've got to make your pile in a hurry, eh, Kid?" said Harry interrogatively, after the heavy-eyed Oriental had improvised a mysterious, but entirely satisfying, supper, and placed bottles and glasses on the table.

"That's what," answered the boy. "That's why I came to this God-forsaken country. You see, when Pete came back there two years ago, and told us about the life out here, and the way men made fortunes so easy, we decided that it was foolish for me to go plugging along in the feed store, where I couldn't expect the business to grow. From what Pete said, it listened like a sure thing. Why, he just laughed, and said there was plenty more where he got the money he made Aunt Sarah take, and——"

"Whoa, there, Kid!" interrupted Harry sharply. "Pete ain't much of a talker, but he has got a tongue in his head, an' I reckon he can use it if he wants me to know about his private business. We don't talk much about the womenfolks we knew back home out here in Crazy Mule, an' I don't reckon Pete would thank you. I've known him twenty years, an' he's never struck it rich in that time. I reckon he'd cleaned up about twenty thousand when he went East two years ago; but in six weeks he was back here lookin' for a grubstake. Nobody ain't never questioned him none about what he done with his pile. I didn't bring you in here to hear about him, an' th' way he seen fit to blow it; but to listen to as much as you care to tell me about yourself."

"I guess there isn't much you don't know," said the boy, taking the rebuke in good part. "I sold out the feed store, lock, stock, and barrel, and was green enough to think I could fetch that little wad out here and buy a claim,

where all I would have to do would be to pick up the nuggets. Well, it isn't a bit like that, and I'm cured of the idea, all right. What I've got isn't enough to do any good; I've seen you win more calling a single turn at the faro bank. If I had three times as much I might do something. Simpson is willing to sell a half interest in the Duck Wing for ten thousand, and Pete himself says it's a good proposition."

Harry nodded assent.

"Yes; it's good at that price, Kid," he said slowly. "Good fer a man that can afford to take a gamble; but what's yer hurry? You are young and strong, an' there's many a lot better claims than th' Duck Wing waitin' to be discovered. You don't need no grubstakin', an' Crazy Mule ain't th' only patch of gold-bearin' dirt in th' world."

"But I tell you that I've got to get quick action, Harry," answered the boy impatiently. "You gave me one lesson a little while ago, when you told me that we don't talk about our women-folks out here; but—"

"'Nuff said, Kid!" broke in Harry, grinning. "I reckoned that was about it. Pete allowed before you came out here that you wasn't tryin' to outleg th' sheriff, an' when I see a likely young chap honin' to make his pile so sudden I'm wise that there's a petticoat in th' bush, if it isn't somethin' back East he's tryin' to square off. You're quick to learn your lesson, Kid, an' yer dead right. We don't talk much, or we might all have stories to tell. I needn't hear yours, my boy; but I know how it feels myself, an' I'll back you. Don't you go monkeyin' around no gamblin' table, where you'd get trimmed before you knew you was playin'. I'll stake you to what you need to buy into th' Duck Wing; Pete's dead right; it looks like a good thing, an' you can pay me back if it pans out."

"And if it peters out, instead?" asked the boy, his face flushing.

"I reckon I've stood greater losses without hollerin' none," answered Harry carelessly. "You can pay me back if you strike it rich later on; if it doesn't come your way, all right."

The boy impulsively extended his hand; but Harry made no move to take it when he saw that the gesture was accompanied by a negative shake of the head.

"I only give my hand to bind a bargain, Kid," he said significantly. "You can have the money in the mornin'."

"I'll take the money when I've earned it, or won it, Harry," answered the boy, laughing. "Don't think that I'm not grateful for your offer; but I can't accept it, just the same. I'm no grafter, and I didn't try to tell you my hard-luck story to make a touch. You say yourself that the purchase of an interest in the Duck Wing would be a gamble, and I've seen enough of the mining game to know that it's all a gamble, whether you stake your coin in buying in, or your time and muscle in digging. There's no use in reading me a lecture, old man; I came out here on a gambler's chance; but my stake isn't big enough to sit into the real game—yet. It's make or break with me; I'll treble it, or go broke quick. I'll take a hand myself to-morrow night."

Harry looked at him through the haze of tobacco smoke for an uncomfortable time without speaking. The boy's face was flushed, his eyes sparkling with anticipation. It was not a strong face, and Harry was not given to fondness for weakness; but something in it which he could not define appealed to him.

He had no moral scruples about gambling; in one form or another, it had been his pastime since he came to the mining country, twenty years before, a younger and no more experienced boy than the one before him. But, except in mining—which, after all, is, perhaps, the greatest game of chance in the world—he had played for the love of it, and not for the stakes.

In the boy's face he read a different and more dangerous passion; the temperament which would make the stake the main object, the weakness which would inevitably resort to fraud, if luck and skill were not sufficient to win. If he left him to his own devices, there was small enough chance that his initial venture at the Golden Eagle would leave

him in a financial position to gratify immediately a further desire for play, unless he took a hand in the game himself to insure fair treatment. With that, there was always the chance of that "sucker's luck" which so frequently favors the beginner that it has become traditional; that dangerous lure of the fickle jade which has so often converted the novice, who essays from curiosity, into the passionate devotee.

Harry could not have told why he cared what became of the youngster; in the rough life of the mining camps, he had seen more than one of his kind go to the dogs, or work out his own salvation without let or interference from him; just as he himself had been let to choose his own path and learn from experience in what it was safe to indulge, and what it was best to avoid. He was shrewd enough to realize that the boy possessed a large portion of that obstinacy which so often goes hand in hand with weakness, and that argument would be useless.

Perhaps a severe lesson at the outset might make him more amenable to wise counsel, and, with that quickness of decision which had been so largely responsible for his own success in life, he resolved to administer that lesson himself.

"Kid, I reckon you've reached th' age that th' law allows makes a man," he said quietly. "I've made you a fair offer, an' it's still open to you; but if you're sot on losin' what you've got, instead of usin' it to make more, I'll help you out. I reckon I can use that dust you're so willin' to get rid of as well as any of those roughnecks at th' Golden Eagle. You think it over in th' daytime, an' if you're still of the same mind when you knock off to-morrow night, come around here. I'll take it away from you if I can, and if you can win enough from me to buy into th' Duck Wing, you're good an' plenty welcome to it."

The boy smiled; but it was his turn to refuse the outstretched hand.

"Hold on a minute, Harry; there's no funny business about this, is there?" he asked suspiciously. "You're not

framing up a scheme to let me win the money from you?"

There was no affectation of merri-ment in the miner's hearty answering laugh.

"If you get any of my dust away from me at poker, you can look at it as a gift from Providence," he said. "I'm on th' level in sayin' you're welcome to what yer need if yer hold out yer hand fer it; but I don't recognize friendship across a poker table. That goes as it lays, Kid, an' one of us can buy into th' Duck Wing when th' game is over. If you are cleaned out, I'll take a gamble at that myself."

Their hands met across the table as the boy rose from his chair.

"I've got a hunch that I'll carry th' dust around to Simpson myself the next morning," he said, laughing confidently, a laugh which intensified in his face the indefinable expression which had caught the older man's fancy.

"It would be the hardest piece of luck which ever came to th' Kid if he did," he muttered to himself as he watched the slim, boyish figure disappear down the rough trail in the moonlight. "I reckon Pete knows me well enough to understand what I'm up to if th' Kid lets on to him."

And then, until daylight, Harry sat in front of the blazing logs in the great fireplace, wondering if a kind fate would ever do for him what he was planning to accomplish for the boy.

It was entirely characteristic of his temperament and habit of thought that the great thing of his life should have come to him suddenly; for in all things, big or little, he acted without hesitation. Women had formed small part of his life; but *the* woman had for the past year been rarely absent from his thoughts. It was, in reality, but a fleeting glimpse which he had caught of her on a station platform, as his train pulled out of a small Ohio town after one of his hurried visits to the East; but in the loneliness of his life in a mining camp, the memory of her face had remained so constantly with him that he had grown fatalistic about it.

He had returned to the town, in the hope that he might again see her; but she had evidently been simply passing through, and was unknown there. But Harry was as confident that sooner or later they would meet again as he was sure that in all this wide world she was the one woman for whom he could ever really care.

If his luck held—and of that he was equally confident—in another six months he would be able to close out his present ventures with a safe fortune, and then he would take up the search for her in earnest; a search which he had not the slightest doubt would be successful, for he was not an easy man to defeat, and previous victories in all he had undertaken had given him supreme faith in his luck.

And, with the half-conscious realization that it was a fellow feeling which was making him so wondrous kind in going out of his way to save the Kid from the destruction for which he was heading, he turned in, to dream in a confused way of a rosy future, in which his own happiness seemed curiously mixed with the younger man's salvation.

Daylight apparently brought no wiser counsel to the Kid; for, even earlier than he was expected, he appeared at Harry's cabin, and, after a curt greeting, looked significantly at the locker where he knew the cards and chips were kept.

"That money is still burning holes in your pocket, eh, Kid?" asked the miner, with a good-natured grin.

The boy nodded, and threw a pocket-book on the table, placing beside it a small buckskin bag of dust.

"There's what I brought with me, and what I've cleaned up since I've been in the camp," he answered. "It's yours if you can win it from me, Harry; table stakes, I suppose?"

"I've always maintained that table stakes was the only real game of poker," assented Harry, pausing with his hand on the door of the locker. "See here, Kid: that other offer still goes; I'll leave th' cards in th' shelf, an' treble your stack if you'll take it."

The boy made a gesture of impatience.

"We settled all that last night, Harry," he answered obstinately. "Bring 'em out, and let's begin, or I'll try my luck at the Golden Eagle. You said yourself that friendship doesn't go across a poker table, and I'll do my best to win your money; but I'll be hanged if I'll take it as a gift."

Harry shrugged his broad shoulders, and motioned to the Chinaman to clear the table.

"There have been several misguided individuals in Crazy Mule stung by that same bug, Kid; but my scalp hasn't been lifted yet," he said grimly. "What's the size of th' pile?"

The boy gave him the amount, and Harry, with scrupulous exactness, weighed out a corresponding value of dust and tiny nuggets.

"Most of that's velvet, Kid; an' I'm still ahead of th' game if you take it away from me," he said, as he threw the bag on the table, and, with a careless indifference, which contrasted strongly with the almost feverish eagerness of the boy to begin, he drew a chair to the table.

And then, with varying fortune to the players, that duel went on for hours, the boy's winning at the outset justifying the old tradition of beginner's luck so well that twice he had "tapped" his more experienced adversary for his last chips, to be beaten by the narrowest margins on the show-down. With his success came an elation which he could not conceal, and the glasses and bottle placed conveniently to his hand were disregarded.

Harry played almost silently, taking the cards as they came to him with imperturbable expression, but keenly watching the boy's play and face.

And when the luck changed he was no more demonstrative, and none the less observant, noting without comment the Kid's more frequent recourse to the whisky bottle as the stacks of chips in front of him were steadily transferred across the table.

Strange to say, the liquor seemed to have no effect upon him, nor upon his

play, and his hand was steadier when he pushed the last remaining chips into the pot in response to Harry's curt: "I'll tap you, Kid!" than it had been when he cut the cards for the first deal.

"I wish I had more of 'em, Harry, for the luck has turned again!" he exclaimed.

The older man checked the movement which would have exposed his cards in answer to the call.

"It isn't according to Hoyle; but if you can dig up anything else which says your hand wins, I'll cover it," he said.

The boy drew an old-fashioned, hunting-case watch from his pocket.

"How much against that?" he asked eagerly.

"Its weight in dust, Kid," answered Harry indifferently, and as the boy unfastened the leather thong which held it, and pushed it among the chips in the center of the table, he threw his cards, face upward, on top of the heap.

The Kid's hectic face grew ghastly white as he looked at the four smirking kings and the ace of spades which were exposed, and his own ace full dropped from suddenly relaxed fingers to the floor. The stimulus of excitement gone, the poison of the whisky which he had taken suddenly asserted itself, with cumulative effect.

With a hardly intelligible: "That's good!" he pushed back his chair, and rose unsteadily to his feet; and then, before Harry could catch him, fell forward on the table, overturning it, with a crash, and scattering its contents to the four corners of the room. With little apparent effort, the miner picked him up and carried him to a skin-covered couch in the adjoining room; looking down pityingly at the bloated, distorted face, which bore so little resemblance to that of the boy who, a few hours before, had so eagerly sought him out.

"I reckon his head will be as sore as his heart when he's slept off th' whisky," he said to himself. "I didn't mean for him to get jagged; but perhaps it's just as well. I'll put Pete wise to what's

happened before he comes to, and then if he raises any holler about takin' th' money back, Pete can persuade him that he was too drunk to know what he was doin', an' that I'm not entitled to it. Poor devil, I hope he has learned his lesson!"

And then, as the day was breaking over the camp, he leaned over and picked from the floor the watch which the boy had wagered.

"I reckon I'd have been badly flim-flammed if I'd had to make my offer good on this," he said, grinning as he felt its honest, old-fashioned weight in his palm. "I hope grandpa's turnip isn't the worse for th' tumble."

Mechanically he pressed on the milled thumbscrew, and then, when the case flew open, the grin faded from his face, and he stared into it in dumb amazement; for looking at him from the inside of the cover was a photograph, a speaking likeness of the girl he had seen on the station platform!

Handsome Harry's distorted face was little pleasanter to look at than the drink-sodden countenance of the Kid, which he gazed down on a moment later; for in his dark eyes there was none of the pity which had softened them, and the smile of commiseration and kindness had changed to a sneering, contemptuous grin of hatred.

It was inconceivable that the woman of his dreams should belong to a thing like this, an apology for manhood, with no strength of purpose, and none of the elements of success. In his insane jealousy, Harry gloried in the weakness which he had detected in the man whom he now recognized as a rival, and he laughed at his own chivalrous intention to help him as quixotic. Why should he put out his hand to save him from himself? Let him go his own way to the devil, until the woman who had been beguiled by his boyish attractiveness would spurn him.

For just a moment he hesitated, prompted by no better feeling; but realizing that this semisecret gaming session in which he had reduced the boy to beggary would have an ugly look to the world. But the play had been ab-

solutely fair, and of the Kid's seeking, and Harry feared no living man.

Silent Pete would be the first he would have to reckon with, and the sooner he faced it out with him the better. Action, with Harry, always followed quickly on decision, and he was about to summon Sing Long to escort the young drunkard to the shack which he shared with Silent Pete when the door swung open, and Pete himself entered.

"Beggin' yer pardon, Harry, but I'm shore in a heap of trouble," he said awkwardly. "I can't find th' Kid, fer one thing, an' I've got a female woman on my hands, fer another. I'm not given to askin' favors, but I'm shore up against it."

Harry looked at him curiously; for it was hard to associate the grizzled old prospector with anything feminine.

"I can help you out of a part of it, old-timer; th' Kid's asleep in there; drunk—dead to th' world," he said, so brutally that the old man stared at him incredulously. "Women have never been my long suit, Pete, so I reckon you'll have to face that music yourself."

"Quit yer joshin', Harry," said the old man, with a helpless shake of his head. "Th' Kid isn't a booze fighter, an' I'm not th' kind to be havin' a female chase me fer my beauty, or a bank roll which I haven't got."

A harsh, disagreeable laugh came from Harry's lips as he indicated the scattered cards and chips with a sweeping gesture.

"A lot you know about th' Kid's ways an' habits, old-timer," he said jeeringly. "He's learned a heap since he struck Crazy Mule, an' it's only fair that he should pay for his learnin'. We've been using the pasteboards to-night, Pete, an' luck didn't come his way. He's cleaned out, busted; an' I've won everything he had in th' world."

Pete chuckled, and shook his head.

"Harry, it's blamed early in the mornin' fer me ter appreciate this here kind of jokin'; but I reckon——"

"Jokin' be damned! I'm in dead earnest, man!" interrupted Harry impatiently, as he strode across to the bed-

room door, and threw it open. "Look in here if you want the proof of it; if that snoring whelp on my bed is sleeping the sleep of youthful innocence, I never saw a souse!"

For a moment Pete justified his sobriquet, as he stood beside the couch, a tear coursing down the furrowed, weather-beaten face.

"Th' pore little cuss!" he muttered, as he turned away to face the man who was watching him defiantly from the doorway. "Th' pore little cuss; an' th' pore, misfortunate little gal that's traveled all th' way to Crazy Mule to find him like this. It's hard sleddin', isn't it, Harry?"

"What's that, old-timer?" exclaimed Harry, stepping forward. "You say that a girl has followed him to th' camp?"

"That's what I've been tryin' to convey, Harry," answered Pete hopelessly. "I reckon I'm at th' bottom of all th' misery that's gatherin' here, an' it's all along of my talkin' too much—not that I'm given that away out here; but when I was East, two years back, I couldn't let on to th' folks that I was nothin' but an unsuccessful old grubstaker. I'd cleaned up a little dust up at Calientes, an' I jest naturally blowed it on a grand splurge; eatin' real sardines till I was like to bust, an' drinkin' champagne fer breakfast. I reckon as how it turned th' Kid's head, seein' me blow myself thatway, an' hearin' me talk as if 'me an' Flood an' Mackey 'was pards. It's tough, Harry, ter think I've brought him out here to this, an' it's a damn sight tougher, now that th' little gal has come, too. What are we goin' ter do about it, Harry? You've got to help me out."

Just a trace of shamefacedness came to Harry's expression as he listened; for he knew that the old man was lying in the endeavor to cover some characteristic act of generosity in his old home.

"See here, Pete: I don't know why you should count on me to help you out on this, after what I've told you," he said sullenly. "You know me well enough to know that I play on the

square; but it was me that cleaned him out. He had sucker's luck at first, an' a couple of times he had me fair down to cases; but I won out. I trimmed him to a finish, I tell you, and now he can go to th' devil, for all of me. Fetch th' girl here, an' let her see him; if she wants him she's welcome to him, and I'll wish her joy of her bargain."

Pete's bent shoulders straightened up until his kindly blue eyes were almost on a level with the bloodshot eyes of the younger man.

"Harry, if any other man said about you what you've said about yerself, I'd make him eat his words, or drill him," he said quietly. "I was already a rough-neck when you drifted into the Monte Cañon camp, twenty years ago, an' I've known you well ever since. We went through that famine winter at Pinch-Lelly Gap, when the snow caught us an' showed up th' yellow streak in them as had it, an' although you was only a kid you did more than any one else to bring us through alive. Yes, sonny, you've always played on th' level, an' when you gave me your fist that night at th' Golden Eagle, an' promised that you'd back my play to give th' Kid a square deal, I went home to sleep mighty peaceful. You haven't gone back on that, Harry, or I don't know a man from a polecat."

Had the old man denounced him as a blackleg and a scoundrel, Harry would have answered him in kind, or perhaps with that retort courteous which was common in Crazy Mule, and usually ended in a funeral; but his simple, unshaken faith in him, a faith justified by twenty years of straight dealing, in which he had taken advantage of no man's weakness, made the thought of the ruin he had planned for the boy, in his jealousy, look black to eyes which had never had reason to fall before the gaze of an honest man.

And then, perhaps for the first time in his life, Harry abandoned a plan of action unaccomplished.

"Old-timer, I've been tellin' you God's truth," he said simply; but, noting the change in his voice and manner, the old man listened patiently, without inter-

rupting him. "Th' Kid hasn't got th' sand to buck a losin' game till th' luck turns. He weakened on the prospectin' when he found that every pan wasn't half full of nuggets an' dust. I'm not judgin' him, Pete; but I reckon he's th' kind of material that bends pretty easy. I calculated to do th' square thing by him, just th' same, an' when I found he was hell bent on tryin' to boost his stake at poker, I reckoned it would be easier for him to stand th' jolt that was comin' to him if he got it from me here than from that bunch of high-binders down at Tim's. I trimmed him, Pete; but I never counted on keepin' th' money. I reckoned that, between us, we could pound sense enough into his head to make him see th' error of his ways after he was down to hard pan. I wasn't doin' it all for him, nor for you, old-timer; but a whole lot for a girl back East he had told me about—a girl I thought I'd never seen."

"He never let on nothin' about that ter me, Harry. What about her?" asked Pete, when the younger man paused.

"I didn't know much more myself," continued Harry. "I reckon he'd have told me more if I had let him; but it was part of his education to learn him that we don't talk about our women in Crazy Mule, old-timer. I didn't need to know any more to make me take him in hand. I won every red cent he had in th' world, Pete; all he carried out with him, and th' dust he'd cleaned up here, an' then th' crazy fool put up this."

He drew the watch from his pocket, and held it up, Pete watching him without comment.

"Pete—so help me, God—I hadn't a thought 'of harm for th' Kid until I looked into it!" he said earnestly, as he again opened the case. "But when I looked at th' picture of this girl, an' thought how I'd been scheming to give her to such a thing as lies in there on th' couch, I called myself a fool. I've thought of that girl for a year, Pete; I never seen her but once; but I knew she was the mate for a man like me; a man who would face th' world and fight for her. I reckon I was a

little off my nut for a while there, Pete; but I've found myself again. Here's the Kid's pile, an' I'll leave it with you to make him take it when he sobers up. I don't reckon I want to stay around here to witness th' further proceedin', an' I'm hittin' th' trail for Copperhead. I'm keepin' just one thing that I won, Pete; I guess th' Kid won't grudge me that. I want th' picture out of this watch."

He drew his penknife to work it loose, but Pete reached over, and took the ancient timepiece from his hand.

"Women shorely does play hell with things in general; but it's tough to think of a purty little gal like this scarin' a husky cuss like you off'n his claim, Harry," he said, as he looked at the photograph. "It's a good picter of her, too; only it ain't half so purty as she looked this mornin' after bein' all night on th' Copperhead trail. She's down at my shack now, Harry; it ain't no fitten place fer a woman; but she came sudden an' unexpected when she suspicioned from th' Kid's letters that things wasn't goin' jest right with him."

Harry was already busying himself in gathering up such effects as he intended to take with him, and he muttered something unintelligible, which the old man saw fit to interpret as a question.

"Yes, she's purty well wise that he ain't jest th' strongest thing that Natur' intended ter stand perpendicular an' wear pants; fer she's known him ever sence he was a baby, an' th' gal's no fool," he continued, with unwonted garrulity. "I reckon she knows a man, a real man, when she sees one, or even a picter of him. I calculated mebbe that was why she sort of flushed an' looked mighty pleased when I showed her your foty-graft that's tacked up in th' shack, after tellin' her that you'd been keepin' a watchful eye on th' Kid. Of cohse, I didn't savvy at that time that you'd ever seen each other, an' that there'd been any of that there love-at-first-sight pidjin goin' on, an' I suspicioned it was jest gratitude fer——"

Harry turned about sharply from his packing, the shoes which he was about to place in his blanket roll still in his hands.

"Cut it out, old-timer!" he said irritably. "I never knew you to talk so damned much before, and I don't like that line after what I'd framed up to do to that little squirt she's stuck on."

Just a suspicion of a grin came to Pete's lips, and a decided twinkle to his eyes.

"I'm shore hell when I gets started; that's why I'm careful," he said. "I jest nachurally can't stop myself until I've got it all out withouten danger of bustin'; so, as I was sayin', not knowin' anything about that there love-at-first-sight happenin', I suspicioned she was blushin' an' lookin' kinder fussed up because you'd been so good to her little brother, an'——"

The shoes dropped from Harry's hands to the floor as he jumped forward and grasped Pete by the shoulders.

"What's that, old-timer? Say it again!" he fairly shouted, and the old man chuckled as he disengaged himself from his clutches.

"Harry, yer shorely the interruptinist cuss I ever met up with," he protested. "You've sort o' busted th' flow of my conversation, an' I reckon I can't resume. If you'll jest holler fer that Chink of yours to come in an' help me thump th' Kid back into th' likeness of somethin' human, you can jest hump yerself up ter my shack, an' get all th' information yer want at headquarters—unless you're still sot on hittin' th' Copperhead trail."

Harry kicked the half-packed roll under a bench, and shouted for Sing.

"Old-timer, you get this here shack in order while I'm out," he said, as he smoothed his rumpled hair in front of his shaving glass. "Then you get th' Kid in shape to pass muster. I reckon mebbe I can help make a man of him yet; for I'll be hanged if I'll have a quitter for as close a relative as a brother-in-law."

ADVENTURINGS *in the* PSYCHICAL



IX.—OUR LARGER SELF

IT is barely fifty years since the problem of supreme interest to mankind—the problem of the nature, possibilities, and destiny of man—began to be studied in a really scientific way; yet in that scant half century more progress has been made toward its solution than in all the previous thousands of years that have elapsed since man first asked himself: What am I? What are my capabilities? Shall I be, after I have ceased to exist here on earth?

Armed with instruments of the most delicate precision, devising novel methods for exploring the body and the mind in their mutual ramifications, modern investigators have thrown a flood of new and largely unexpected light on the great questions at issue, and have opened vistas of hope, and aspiration, and actual achievement undreamed of by the vanished peoples of bygone times.

At first sight, to be sure, much of their effort appears to be irreparably, even wantonly, destructive, and perhaps nowhere more so than in the blows they have dealt at the traditional conception of the central fact in man's psychical make-up—that intangible entity variously known as the ego, the self, the personality, animated and governed by an indwelling, unifying principle, the soul. Every man instinctively believes that there is only one of him. He feels that, no matter how his thoughts, his

sensations, his emotions may change in the course of time, he himself will remain essentially and permanently the same. Putting this belief into metaphysical language, he declares, with the excellent Doctor Thomas Reid:

"The conviction which every man has of his identity needs no aid of philosophy to strengthen it; and no philosophy can weaken it without first producing some degree of insanity. The identity of a person is a perfect identity; wherever it is real it admits of no degrees; and it is impossible that a person should be in part the same and in part different, because a person is a monad, and is not divisible into parts."

But the modern explorer of the nature of man, replies:

"You are wrong, my friend. Your self is very far from being the simple, stable unity that you imagine it to be. In reality it is most complex and most unstable, easily breaking up, and sometimes breaking up so completely that it may even be replaced by an entirely new self. You do not believe this? I can prove it to you from the facts not only of scientific experiment, but also of everyday observation."

Naturally, in support of this statement, stress would be laid on instances resembling the strange case of BCA, which I narrated last month. And, to tell the truth, although cases at all similar to the BCA affair are extremely uncommon, it is not difficult to cite

many evidencing in other ways so-called "total dissociation of personality." For example:

A few years ago a merchant living in Petersburg, Virginia, visited New York to purchase some stock for his store. After a two days' stay, during which he transacted a great deal of business, met many acquaintances, and seemed to be in his usual health, he started for home by steamer. When the tickets were collected he was missing. No one had seen him leave the boat, jump, or fall overboard. All sorts of theories were advanced to account for his disappearance, and a vigorous search was made, but to no purpose.

Six months afterward, when all hope had been abandoned, and the court had appointed an administrator for his estate and a guardian for his children, word was received that he had suddenly appeared at a relative's house in a city hundreds of miles distant. A friend at once hurried there, and brought him back to Petersburg, where he gave his physician, Doctor H. G. Leigh, an account of what had happened to him.

"I was feeling very tired after a busy day in the city," he said, "so went to my stateroom immediately upon going aboard the boat. Up to that time I was thoroughly conscious, but after that I recall nothing—all was oblivion—till six months later, when I came suddenly to myself in a distant city in the South, where I knew no one.

"I found myself driving a fruit wagon on the street. I was utterly astounded. Why I was there, how and when I got there, what I had been doing, were puzzling questions to me. Upon inquiry I learned that I had been there, and at work, for some time. My life since I was in that stateroom had been an absolute blank to me. I started at once for Virginia, but on the way I felt so utterly worn out that I stopped in a certain town and went to the house of a very near relative. From there I was taken home."

Where, it may well be asked, was this man's original self during these six months? What had become of his normal ego, the ego of which alone he

had formerly been aware? Yet at no time throughout the period when he lacked knowledge of his identity, and was without memory for his earlier life and social relationships, did he display the slightest sign of mental aberration. He was as sane and real to himself and to those with whom he came into contact, and was as able to take care of himself and earn a sufficient living, as he had ever been in the years before he experienced the remarkable psychical upheaval that had substituted an alien, a "secondary" self in the place of the self he had always been and known.

Similarly, a prosperous Philadelphia plumber, a man of exemplary habits and seemingly in good health, left his home to take a short walk. From that moment he disappeared as completely as though the earth had opened and swallowed him. There was no reason why he should abscond or commit suicide, and the general belief was that he had met with foul play. Rewards were offered, and detectives employed, but no trace of him could be found. His wife, giving him up for dead, sold his business and removed with their children to Chicago.

Nearly two years later, the workmen in a tinshop in a Southern city were startled one morning by the conduct of one of their number, who, dropping his tools and pressing his hand to his head in a bewildered way, sprang to his feet, and cried:

"My God! Where am I? How did I get here? This isn't my shop!"

The foreman, thinking he was drunk, or had gone insane, ran forward to pacify him.

"Steady, Smith, steady!" he exclaimed. "You'll be all right in a minute."

The other only stared at him wildly.

"Why do you call me Smith?" he demanded. "That isn't my name."

"That's the name you've gone by since you came among us six months ago."

"Six months ago! You're crazy, man. It isn't half an hour since I left my wife and little ones to get a breath of fresh air before dinner."

"Look here," said the foreman, pressing him gently into a seat, "where do you suppose you are, anyway?"

"Why, in Philadelphia, of course."

It was indeed the Philadelphia plumber, whose missing self had returned to him as suddenly and as mysteriously as it had vanished. A few days more and he was happily reunited with the family that had so long believed him to be among the dead.

A blow, an illness, a fright, the stress of a prolonged emotion—any one of several causes may bring about this weird condition, of which I could give illustrative cases to a number that would fill many columns of this magazine. Sometimes, though fortunately seldom, there may be—as in the case of BCA—a double or even a multiple dissociation, resulting in the development of two, three, four, or more secondary selves, which alternate with one another in a way productive of the most intense mental agony to the helpless victim.

But, after all, it is not necessary to insist on such extreme instances in order to demonstrate the essential instability and divisibility of that which we commonly have in mind when we speak of the "self." Dissociation of personality is in evidence every day in the pathetic symptomatology of the various insanities, and in the chronic, if often masked and unrecognized, memory lapses universal among sufferers from the manifold affections of hysteria, such as we dealt with in the article, "The Law of Dissociation." It is in evidence in the victims of alcoholic and drug excesses, who, in a very literal sense, may become "another person," and say and do things quite alien from their usual self, and concerning which their usual self afterward has no knowledge.

Even normal sleep, albeit a wise provision for the rest and strengthening of the organism, involves dissociation. Still more strikingly is dissociation evident in the phenomena of the state of artificial sleep induced by hypnotism.

It would carry us too far from the point now under consideration to enter here into any discussion of the nature and mechanism of hypnotism, that still

widely misunderstood but marvelous agency, not simply for therapeutic purposes, but for the study and exploration of man's inmost being. To this we shall later have occasion to return. The thing of immediate importance is the fact that under the influence of hypnotism a person invariably develops a self more or less different from his ordinary waking, conscious self.

Hypnotized, he is to all outward seeming oblivious to everything transpiring around him. But let the hypnotist speak to him, question him, and he instantly responds with answers so intelligent as to indicate that, in some respects, at all events, he is more alert and keen than when wide awake. Curiously enough, however, commands and suggestions given to him are, within certain limitations, accepted and acted upon, no matter how disagreeable or absurd they may be.

Later, when awakened, he is in precisely the same position as are victims of spontaneous dissociation—such as the Petersburg business man, the Philadelphia plumber, and Doctor Prince's puzzling neurasthene, BCA. That is to say, he is unable to give any account of what he has said and done during hypnosis. Thus the effect of hypnotism is to produce a psychical cleavage so profound as to involve the action, within a single organism, of two separate selves.

This has been demonstrated by a long line of scientific investigators, including physicians and psychologists of international reputation. Moreover, these investigators have shown that, even after a person has been brought out of the hypnotic state, the self evoked by hypnotism may in some inscrutable way continue operant without his suspecting for a moment its existence and influence.

Impressive proof of this is found in the execution of what are known as post-hypnotic commands. A hypnotized person is told that, after being dehypnotized, he is to perform a certain act on receiving a certain signal, or at the expiration of a certain time. As usual, when restored to his conscious, waking state, he remembers nothing of the command imposed on him; but when the

signal is given, or the appointed time arrives, he feels an irresistible, and to him inexplicable, impulse to carry out the suggested idea.

For example, in one series of fifty-five experiments made by the foremost English authority on hypnotism, Doctor J. Milne Bramwell, the subject, a young woman of nineteen, was ordered to perform a specified act at the end of a varying number of minutes, ranging from three hundred to more than twenty thousand. Not once, on being dehypnotized, did she remember what she had been told to do, although offered a liberal reward if she could recall the commands given her.

Nevertheless, only two of the fifty-five experiments were complete failures, while in forty-five she executed the commands at exactly the moment designated, and in the remainder was at no time more than five minutes out of the way. As to the complete failures, Doctor Bramwell ascertained that in one instance she had mistaken the suggestion given, and in the other the circumstances were such that the command might have been executed without his being aware of it.

Equally astonishing results are reported by the brilliant group of Frenchmen who, uniting under the direction of Doctor A. A. Liébeault, were the first to make an organized investigation of the cause and effects, the possibilities and limitations, of hypnotism. One of these French investigators, Doctor Hippolyte Bernheim, once hypnotized an old soldier, and asked him:

"On what day in the first week of October will you be at liberty?"

"On the Wednesday."

"Well," said Doctor Bernheim, "on that day you will pay a visit to Doctor Liébeault; you will find in his office the president of the republic, who will present you with a medal and a pension."

The soldier was then awakened and questioned as to what had been said to him, but could remember nothing. However, on Wednesday, October 3d, Doctor Liébeault wrote to Doctor Bernheim:

Your soldier has just called at my house. He walked to my bookcase, and made a re-

spectful salute; then I heard him utter the words: "Your excellency!" Soon he held out his right hand, and said: "Thanks, your excellency." I asked him to whom he was speaking. "Why, to the president of the republic." He turned again to the bookcase and saluted, then went away. The witnesses to the scene naturally asked me what that madman was doing. I answered that he was not mad, but as reasonable as they or I, only another person was acting in him.

Compare with this an amusing little story told by Doctor Morton Prince.

"Wishing to test the compelling influence of post-hypnotic commands," he said, "I suggested to one of my subjects, Mrs. R., after she was hypnotized, that on the following day, when she went down to dinner, she would put on her bonnet, and keep it on during the whole of dinner time. The next day I received a letter from her in which she said:

I think I am getting insane. At dinner time I would wear my hat during the meal.

On further inquiry, I obtained the following story, which I give substantially in the original language:

"As I was going into dinner, my girl asked me what I was going out for. 'I am not,' says I. 'I am going to eat my dinner.' 'Then what have you got your hat on for?' says she. I put my hand to my head, and there was my bonnet. 'Lord, Mamie!' says I. 'Am I going crazy?' 'No, mother,' she says, 'you often do foolish things.' I began to get frightened, but took off my bonnet and went into the next room to dinner."

"Then the younger child similarly asked her where she was going, and called attention to her having her bonnet on. A second time she raised her hand to her head, and to her surprise found that her bonnet was really there. She again took it off, and later, when her husband entered, the same thing was repeated; but when she found her bonnet on her head for the third time, she made excuse of the stormy words that ensued to declare she would 'keep it on now till she was through.' After dinner, being alarmed, she consulted a neighbor about it."

But the longest time on record for the carrying out of a post-hypnotic sugges-

tion was made by a subject of Doctor Liégeois, another of the early French investigators. Doctor Liégeois hypnotized a young man, and said to him:

"A year from to-day this is what you are going to do, and what you are going to see: You will call at Doctor Liébeault's office in the morning, and tell him that you have come to thank him and Doctor Liégeois for all they have done to improve your health. While you are talking to him, you will see enter the room a dog with a monkey riding on its back. They will perform a thousand tricks that will amuse you very much.

"Then you will see a man come in, leading a great American grizzly bear, which will also perform tricks. It will be a tame bear, so that you will not be at all frightened. The man will be delighted at recovering his trained dog and monkey, which he thought he had lost. Before he leaves you will borrow a few cents from Doctor Liébeault to give to him."

Doctor Liégeois, after repeating these complicated and absurd directions, awoke the young man, and by cautious questioning ascertained that his memory was a perfect blank for all that had been said to him while he was hypnotized. Great care was taken not to recall to his mind at any time the command given him, and which his hypnotic self was expected to remember and perform on the appointed day.

Exactly a year later, at nine in the morning, Doctor Liégeois went to Doctor Liébeault's office, where he waited half an hour, and then returned home, thinking that the experiment had failed. But at ten minutes to ten the young man arrived. There was nothing about his appearance to indicate that he was in any abnormal condition.

He greeted Doctor Liébeault, explained that he had come to thank him for his kindness to him, and inquired for Doctor Liégeois, whom he said he had expected to find there. A few minutes afterward, Doctor Liégeois having meanwhile been hastily summoned, the young man cried out that a monkey had just come in, riding on the back of a dog. He watched the antics of these

imaginary animals with great interest, laughing heartily, and describing the tricks he fancied he saw them performing. After this, he announced the arrival of a man who was evidently the owner of the monkey and the dog, and he begged Doctor Liébeault to lend him a little money to reward the man for the amusement his animals had given him. But he saw no bear.

A moment later he was conversing with the two physicians, in evident ignorance of all that he had just been saying and doing. He angrily denied that there had been any animals in the room. When asked why he himself was there, he could give no definite reply. Doctor Liégeois immediately put him into the hypnotic state, and demanded:

"Do you know why you came here this morning?"

"Of course I do."

"Why was it?"

"Because you told me to."

"When?"

"A year ago."

"But you did not come at nine o'clock?"

"You did not tell me to come at nine o'clock. You said to come at exactly a year from the time you were talking to me. It was ten minutes to ten when you gave me your command."

"And why did you not see the bear?"

"Because you said nothing about a bear when you repeated your orders. You spoke only once of a bear. Everything else you spoke of twice. I thought you had changed your mind about the bear."

Obviously, the hypnotic self, distinct and different though it is from the primary, waking self, can reason, can analyze, can draw conclusions as readily as the conscious self, and is, to put it otherwise, as truly a self as the conscious self.

Facts like these, as was said, have caused numerous investigators to question the validity of the hitherto prevailing view of human personality. The self, they affirm, is no single, continuous, permanent entity. On the contrary, it is merely a loosely coordinated aggregation of mental states, forever shifting

and changing, so that the self of to-morrow may be vastly different from the self of to-day. To quote Professor Ribot, the famous scientist, and one of the most distinguished exponents of this new view of the self:

"The unity of the ego is not the unity of a single entity diffusing itself among multiple phenomena; it is the coördination of a certain number of states perpetually renascent, and having for their sole, common basis the vague feeling of the body. This unity does not diffuse itself downward, but is aggregated by ascent from below; it is not an initial, but a terminal point."

And Ribot adds emphatically:

"It is the organism, with the brain, its supreme representative, which constitutes the real personality; comprising in itself the remains of all that we have been and the possibilities of all that we shall be. The whole individual character is there inscribed, with its active and passive aptitudes, its sympathies and antipathies, its genius, its talent or its stupidity, its virtues and its vices, its torpor or its activity."

Or, as the eminent psychologist, Alfred Binet, declares:

"We have long been accustomed by habits of speech, fictions of law, and also by the results of introspection, to consider each person as constituting an indivisible unity. Actual researches utterly modify this current notion. It seems to be well proven nowadays that if the unity of the ego be real, a quite different definition should be applied to it. It is not a single entity; for, if it were, one could not understand how in certain circumstances some patients, by exaggerating a phenomenon which obviously belongs to normal life, can unfold several different personalities. A thing that can be divided must consist of several parts. Should a personality be able to become double or triple, this would be proof that it is compound, a grouping of, and a resultant from, several elements."

But the brain, which Ribot identifies with the personality, is a mere organ of the body, perishing with the body. Does it follow that the self perishes

with bodily death? Is it really without an abiding, indwelling principle superior to, and independent of, the physical organism—in short, a soul—that would enable it to survive the final catastrophe of earthly existence? Is man soulless? Does death end personality?

Aye, those who hold with Ribot would reply. To speak of a soul is, in their view of the case, sheer mysticism, since "the ego in us is nothing more than the functional result of the arrangement for the time being of the molecules or ions of our brain matter."

That is why, at the beginning of this article, I stated that, of all the labors of the modern investigators of the nature of man, none would seem to be so irreparably destructive as the blows they have dealt at the traditional conception of human personality.

Yet, when we probe a little deeper, it will be found that the damage is not so irreparable as would at first appear; nay, it will even be found that by their searching inquiries, the advocates of the brain-stuff theory have unwittingly provided stronger reasons than were at any previous time available for insisting both on the actuality of the soul and the fundamental unity and continuity of the ego.

Undeniably, it is necessary to modify the old conception in some important respects. After the discoveries that have been made as to the disintegrating effects of natural and artificially induced sleep, of disease, of sudden frights, of profound emotional shocks, of alcohol and drugs, etc., it is idle to pretend that unity and continuity are distinctive characteristics of the ordinary self of waking life. So far as that self is concerned, its instability and divisibility are now plainly evident.

What, however, if it can be shown that, equally with the secondary selves that may and so often do replace it, the primary self is only part of a larger self—a self which persists unchanged beneath all the mutations of spontaneous and experimental occurrence? In that case it will at once become clear that the situation has again changed completely, and that we are back to the

traditional, the intuitive, the "common-sense" conception of personality, with the single difference that the term "self" means something broader and nobler than when we limit it to the now demonstrated, unstable, and ever-changeable self of ordinary consciousness.

And it is precisely to such a view of the self that the discoveries of the modern investigators, when closely scrutinized, irresistibly impel us. If, I repeat, they have shown that what we usually look upon as the self is liable to sudden extinction, they have likewise brought to light abundant evidence to prove that there is none the less an abiding self, a self not dominated by and unaffected by any vicissitudes that may befall the organism.

To be sure, it must be said that, as yet, comparatively few of those to whom we owe this evidence are prepared to admit that such is the ultimate outcome of their efforts. All the same, the evidence is there, not simply justifying, but rendering logically necessary, the hypothesis of a continuous, unitary ego, inclusive of, and superior to all, changing selves of outward manifestation, and possessing powers thus far little recognized; but, under certain conditions, utilizable for our material, intellectual, and moral betterment.

We have, in fact, in the previous articles reviewed much of the evidence supporting this view. All the phenomena of subconscious mental action—as variously exhibited in telepathy, crystal vision, automatic writing and speaking, the cure of disease by wholly mental means—point unmistakably, I am per-

sueded, to the existence of a superior self to which the ordinary self of everyday life stands in much the same relation as does the secondary self of a hysterical patient to the ordinary, normal self of a healthy person.

Not all the faculties of the larger self—for instance, the faculty involved in telepathic action—seem to be adapted for ready employment here on earth. Which would argue, of course, for a future state in which, freed from all hampering limitations of the body, such faculties will have full manifestation.

But most assuredly, as the findings of the psychopathologists indicate plainly, some among these hidden powers are amply available for use here and now, and may be so employed as to enable the self of ordinary consciousness to become less liable to disintegration, to ward off and conquer disease, to develop mental attainments of a high order, to solve life's varying problems with a sureness and success sadly lacking to most of us at present.

For the matter of that, however, so far as intellectual activities are concerned, there have always been some few men so happily situated that they have been able to draw systematically on the resources of their larger self, attaining thereby a brilliant preëminence in the annals of the human race. Since, as I believe, it is possible for all of us to emulate more successfully their achievements than is now the case, it may not be without profit to turn next to a study of these fortunate individuals—"men of genius," as they are popularly called.



THE MYSTERY

THEY who have loved too well—and been betrayed,
Tried in the fire and utterly dismayed,
Strange, is it not, how they return to Love,
And bare their hearts to his great gleaming blade!

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.

MONBODDO BRIGGS AND THE HUMAN MIND



AS Monboddoo Briggs entered his home the sun was well up, and the flame of his lantern burned a sickly yellow. The table was set for breakfast, and from the kitchen came the odor of crisp bacon and frying eggs, and Monboddoo extinguished the ill-smelling lantern and took off his coat, and, without other preliminaries, took his place at the head of the table.

He was a thin, little old man, about sixty-eight, with weather-beaten face and hands, and thin wisps of colorless hair, but his most characteristic feature was his smile. Time and weather had drawn his face into innumerable wrinkles, and among these there were some that formed his permanent, unchanging smile. It was as if, to save time in the expectation of having to smile soon, he wore his smile ready-made, available for instant use by the mere introduction of a sparkle into his eyes.

"Well, ma," he said, as his wife entered from the kitchen with the hot plate of bacon and eggs, "I done some good work last night, I did that! I invented a substitute for rubber out of cheese rinds."

"Go 'long, Boddy!" said Mrs. Briggs. "How come you ever to think of it?"

"I guess Hiram sort of suggested it," said Mr. Briggs modestly. "He come into the lumber yard to set with me a while last evening, and he was telling

about the price rubber has riz to, and how there ought to be some sort of stuff to take its place, so I set myself to work to have a thought about it. Seems like cheese rinds was the best thing I could think of. You take a cheese rind, and doctor it up right, and it wouldn't make no bad rubber, ma. You take a good large cheese, and cut the middle out, and the rind ain't so far from lookin' like an automobile tire, anyway; and the rind ain't nothin' but waste. I sort of thought it was worth while giving fellers a chance at it, anyways."

"Seems like it was a good thought to me," said Mrs. Briggs, pushing her spectacles up to the edge of her hair. "Did you have any more thoughts?"

"Not many, not many," said Monboddoo. "I thought some more about the millennium, but I mostly thought about rubber. Rubber is mighty necessary to human progress right now. Ain't Sally comin' down to breakfast?"

"Sally ain't home," said Mrs. Briggs. "Wiggins' little girl is sick abed, an' Sally went over to give Mrs. Wiggins a night's rest. Pa," she said suddenly, "I do wish, some night while you are thinking, you'd give a thought to Sally gettin' married. Have you a mind how old Sally is? She's twenty-eight, and it's full plenty time she was married."

"Pshaw, now!" said Monboddoo. "Is Sally twenty-eight? You're right, ma. I vum, I'll have a thought about her marrying this very night! A man hadn't

ought to neglect his daughter no matter what happens to the world."

Monboddo Briggs was night watchman in Endricksen's lumber yard, and he had ample time for thought between his rounds of the yard, but the world had little conception of what it owed to Monboddo Briggs. Sitting on the board that lay across two scantlings stuck between two layers of lumber in a pile near the yard gate, Monboddo Briggs, in the long nights, had thought out—to his own satisfaction—the relation of the human mind to all things.

"What can't be thought of can't be did!" he told Hiram Pfeffer, who often came to sit with him in the lumber yard in the evenings. "Some feller had to think of a steam engine before there could be one, didn't he? Take a pin, now. Some feller thought: 'A pin would be mighty handy,' and so there were pins. If he hadn't thought of a pin there wouldn't have been pins."

"Sure not," agreed Hiram.

"Same way with flying machines," said Boddy. "Somebody had to think he would like to fly before anybody could make a flying machine. Maybe it was ten million centuries ago, but somebody had to think it. Like as not he thought it was dumb foolishness to think such a thing, but the minute he turned that thought loose he made it possible for flying machines to be."

"I guess that's right, Boddy," said Hiram. "I know I thought of comin' over here to set with you before I came."

"Of course you did!" said Monboddo Briggs enthusiastically. "I've thought this business all out. Nothing can be that hasn't been thought of by the human mind. And anything that can be thought of by the human mind can be, and will be—sooner or later. The human thought is the horse, and the things is the cart, and there ain't nobody goin' to say the cart ought to go before the horse."

"It wouldn't be good sense," agreed Hiram.

"You bet it wouldn't!" said Monboddo Briggs. "Take this job I've got. Somebody had to think of such a job

as the job of night watchman in a lumber yard before I could get it, didn't he?"

"Yes," said Hiram, nodding his head, "yes."

"And somebody had to think of a lumber yard before there was one, didn't he?"

"Why, yes, certainly."

"And there had to be a thought of lumber before there could be lumber, hadn't there?"

"Of course. Surely."

"And trees. Before there could be lumber there had to be trees. And somebody had to think of trees before there could be trees, didn't he?"

"Well, now," said Hiram doubtfully, "I always sort of looked on trees as bein' part of the world. Trees just grow like." He hesitated as a man will. "Boddy," he said, "I sort of feel like God made trees."

"All right! All right!" said Monboddo, smiling with his eyes. "I'm with you there, Hiram. God did make trees. He thought of trees, and there was trees! He thought of the ocean, and the land, and of all things, and they was! I'm with you there, Hiram! And when He had thought of the world complete as it was, what did He do?"

"He rested," said Hiram.

"Yes," said Monboddo, "He rested. He seen His work was good, and He rested, like the Bible says, but what else did He do?"

Hiram looked puzzled.

"I'll tell you what," said Monboddo. "He turned the world over to Adam and Eve, didn't He? And He gave Adam and Eve the human mind for to run the world with. 'Here you are,' He says, 'with a complete world, and with human minds that are part of My own. If you want anything else, think of it.' And the first thing they thought of was trouble, and they got it!"

"They got trouble, sure enough," agreed Hiram.

"You're right they did!" said Monboddo. "And they thought: 'Now, we'll be punished,' and the thought made punishment possible. And they thought: 'Likely we'll be sick and die, as punish-

ment,' and the thought made sickness and death possible. And ever since then the human mind has been thinking things, and those thoughts have made things possible. My way of thinking is that all God gave man to run the world with was human mind, and all man has to do is to think of a thing, and it can be. Take dragons. Men used to think of dragons, and there was dragons; but now they don't think of them, and there ain't any. I could set here and think of dragons, and some day there would be dragons, like as not. I dare say, now I've thought of dragons with my human mind, there is a dragon somewhere this very minute!"

"Don't think of none around this town," said Hiram nervously.

"I'm thinkin' of dragons dead and petrified now," said Monboddoo; "so that's all right!"

"You mean to say that human mind can think out of existence what God made Himself?" asked Hiram.

"Sure!" said Monboddoo. "God made pine forests, didn't He, and ain't man thinkin' them off the surface of the earth? Why, but for me, Hiram, I reckon there wouldn't be no forests, come a few years. Nobody had the thought of savin' the forests, but come ten years ago last fall I says to myself: 'Boddy, if this here forest killin' goes on, there won't be no more lumber, and you'll be out of a job, 'cause there won't be no more lumber yards.' Then I had a thought with my human mind. 'Save the forests,' I thought. And 'twasn't but a year or two when folks down at Washington began to make laws to save the forests. It's mighty lucky I had that thought."

"'Twas so," admitted Hiram, yawning. "Well, I guess I'll move along home."

"Seeing as you've thought of it," said Monboddoo, "you can do it, and if you hadn't thought of it soon, I would have thought of it for you, because I've a lot of human thoughts to think with my human mind to-night."

For Monboddoo Briggs had taken upon himself the vast duty of thinking of the things that should be, but that

no one else has time to think into being. Through the long nights in the lumber yard, as he sat on his board and as he moved about between the lumber piles with his lantern, he made his human mind labor. He thought of republics where monarchies now exist—put Portugal to his credit—and of anti-consumption germs, of machines for picking cherries, of sunlight-storage plants, of a bridge across the Atlantic, and of a million other things. Until a thing is thought of it cannot exist, and men and women are so busy with their affairs of a day, with getting wealth and keeping alive, that no one seems to make a business of thinking of things that no one has ever thought of. But Monboddoo Briggs did. He had time, and he had human mind, and he took the job.

Who knows how much the world has been held back through the lack of men who would think ahead of it? The impossible is impossible merely because no one thinks the impossible things are possible, and into this gap Monboddoo Briggs threw himself. At night, lighted only by his lantern and the stars, he made possible millions of things just by thinking of them. He thought of enough automatic machines to keep the inventors busy for hundreds of years; he thought of thousands of moral uplifts, of countless institutions for benevolence and betterment, of scientific progress.

"Well, ma," he used to say, "I got the time, and if I don't have the thought of these things maybe nobody will."

Whether Mrs. Briggs believed his philosophy or not may never be known, but at least she believed it did no harm.

"Maybe there's something in it, and maybe there ain't," she told Sally, "but it keeps your father awake, and that's something a night watchman needs. And I ain't reached my time of age without knowing there's more than one thing in the world that's hard to believe. Who'd believe a potato in a person's pocket would cure rheumatism, if it hadn't been proved time and again?"

As time passed, however, Monboddoo Briggs felt the weight of the task he

had set himself. Ahead was the whole future of the world, for which he must think progress, and when a man has been thinking with his human mind every night for ten or fifteen years, and has thought of a fish with no bones, and a tree that will weep raindrops in dry climates, and a few thousand other things, it becomes a task to think of any more. If you don't believe it, try to think of some one thing, beneficial to the world, that has not been thought of, by some one, somewhere. Try to think of one new sense with which to endow mankind, or even of one new sensation. You can't do it, because if you should happen to think of one, the chances are that Monboddo Briggs thought of it years ago. It was this grand, helpful optimism under a strain that created Boddy Briggs' perpetual smile.

Sally Briggs, his only daughter, was one of those splendid, large girls who, for some reason beyond comprehension, so often remain unmarried and become old maids. She was hearty and healthy, cheerful and intelligent, blond, with a reddish tinge to her hair, and was organist in the church. At church fairs she was always in charge of a table, and she superintended the Christmas decorations of the church. She taught school in the winters and helped her mother in the summers. She was everything efficient and wholesome, but perhaps she was not sufficiently dainty and "sweet" to appeal to men, or perhaps they recognized in her their superior. That Boddy Briggs was merely a watchman in a lumber yard had nothing to do with it. Class distinctions are not so closely drawn in Kilo. Sally took part in whatever society there was in Kilo.

"So Sally's twenty-eight!" said Boddy Briggs. "I declare I ain't got over thinkin' of her as a baby, ma. But twenty-eight is time a girl was married. I'll have a thought or so about her to-night."

"If I was you," said Mrs. Briggs, as Monboddo climbed the stairs to his bed—for he slept by day—"I'd think about her marryin' John Endricksen. John has been right attentive to Sally lately."

"Seems to me, ma," said Boddy Briggs, with a twinkle in his eye, "that somebody 'bout your size has had a thought that way already!"

"Get along with you!" said Mrs. Briggs good-naturedly.

That evening, as Sally opened the door to let her father out, with his lantern and his lunch, she also opened it to let John Endricksen in; and Mrs. Briggs, after doing her duty as a welcoming mother, retired to the kitchen, where, with the door ajar, she pored over the weekly paper by the light of the kerosene lamp. It was eleven o'clock before John left, and Mrs. Briggs entered the sitting room with a question in her eyes, but Sally gave no sign.

"Sally, did he—" Mrs. Briggs ventured at length. "Did John say anything?"

"Mother!" Sally exclaimed.

"Well, honey," said Mrs. Briggs, "you know I don't mean no harm. I wouldn't try to pry, Sally. You know that, but I thought that if he had said anything—"

"You dear old mother!" cried Sally, patting her on both cheeks. "No, he didn't pick me from the bough to-night."

"I thought maybe he might have said something sort of—" began Mrs. Briggs wistfully.

"I know!" laughed Sally. "Well, the gay cavalier did seem to be a little flirtatious for a few minutes. I was really quite excited. But it passed off calmly. I think he forgot to keep it up, mother."

"Sally," said Mrs. Briggs, "I wouldn't say anything to hurt your father's feelings, but I'll engage that he has been thinking again. I know it. I just know it! He ain't satisfied to think of one thing; he's got to think of a thousand. I told him to think of John Endricksen."

"Probably he did," said Sally.

"Probably he thought of a way to fix well water so it would burn in a lamp!" said Mrs. Briggs.

"Ma," said Monboddo as he entered the house the next morning, "I got to thinkin' about Sally last night—"

"Now, stop, pa," said Mrs. Briggs. "I'll tell you what you thought. You

thought about Sally for a while, and then you let your mind wander off——"

"No. That's where you're wrong!" said Monboddoo, smiling with his eyes. "I thought about Sally all night. I started in thinking about her marrying John Endricksen, and 'fore I was through I reckon I considered everybody in Kilo she might make a wife of."

"Boddy!" exclaimed Mrs. Briggs, clasping her hands. "Oh, why did you do it? If you had only left well enough alone! Land knows I ain't no matchmaker, or Sally would have been married off long ago; but when a girl is as independent as Sally is, her mother just has to help things along."

"All I done was to help," said Monboddoo.

"To help!" exclaimed Mrs. Briggs. "Goodness knows it was hard enough for me to matchmake when there was only John Endricksen thought of as a husband for Sally. It ain't any easy job to bring off a wedding when a girl is as little minded to marry as Sally is, not even when a mother can concentrate her efforts on one man, and try to get him up and coming. And now you have had thoughts of I don't know who all! I wish you had stopped thinking when you had thought of John! Who all have you thought of?"

"Well, ma," said Monboddoo conciliatingly, "I thought of Sam Fliggis, and I thought of Henry O'Toole——"

"The barber!"

"Yes. And Peter Wildasin, and Joe Wheelock, and Morton Vesey, and Walt Connor——"

"Land love us!" cried Mrs. Briggs. "Ain't that all?"

"Why, no. No, it ain't," said Monboddoo. "I figgered that the more chances I made possible, the better chance Sally would have. I thought of Jim Feldstein, and Roger Parkins, and Bud Farnsworth, and Ham Glover, and Orlando Wickworth——"

"Pa! You didn't think of Orlando Wickworth!"

"He sort of come into my mind while I was thinkin' of Ronaldo Wickworth," said Monboddoo excusingly. "And I thought of——"

"Was there any man in Kilo you didn't think of?" asked Mrs. Briggs, with exasperation.

"Lemme see!" said Monboddoo. "Was there? I guess I didn't think of Potter Winch——"

"Well, don't!" said Mrs. Briggs.

"Too late!" said Monboddoo. "I just this minute thought of him!"

"Well, you eat your breakfast and go up to bed, and go to sleep and stop thinkin'!" said Mrs. Briggs. "You've thought enough for one twenty-four hours. I've got to concentrate, and I don't know what man to concentrate on. No matter who I pick out, I may be picking out the wrong man, now that you've made it possible for Sally to marry any man in town. But I do wish you hadn't thought of Orlando Wickworth and Potter Winch! Think of our Sally marryin' Orlando, old enough to be her father, and with eight children by his first and second wives; or that Potter Winch, that never earned a day's wages in his life!"

That afternoon Sally came home from downtown with blazing cheeks.

"Ma," she exclaimed, as soon as she entered the house, "I never, never in my life was so insulted as I was just now! I went into Wickworth Brothers to get the lamp chimney, and when I went back in the back part of the store to pick out the size, that awful old Orlando Wickworth grabbed my hand, and proposed to me right on the spot! He offered to show me his bank book and the last inventory of his stock of goods. I was so mad I jerked away and knocked three casseroles off the bargain table, and busted them all to pieces. The idea!"

"Sally," said Mrs. Briggs quickly, "whatever you do, don't say anything about it to your father! It—it might upset him, and he always tries to do his best by us. You didn't meet Potter Winch downtown, did you?"

"How did you know that?" asked Sally. "He offered to walk home with me, the good-for-nothing!"

Mrs. Briggs sighed.

"I wouldn't have let him," said Sally; "but, anyway, Sam Fliggis and Peter

Wildasin came along just then, and walked up with me."

"Past Henry O'Toole's barber shop, I'll warrant!" said Mrs. Briggs.

"Yes," said Sally, "Henry, and Joe Wheelock, and Morton Vesey were standing out in front. They all bowed to me real politely."

"Humph!" said Mrs. Briggs. "I guess you needn't tell me any more. I can guess you met Walt Connor."

"He spoke to me on the way down," said Sally. "I walked down with Roger Parkins, and Walt Connor asked us into Jim Feldstein's to get some soda, and Bud Farnsworth and Ham Glover were in there——"

There was a knock on the door.

"Miss Sally forgot her lamp chimney," said Ronaldo Wickworth nervously when Mrs. Briggs had opened the door. "If I could speak a few words with her——"

Mrs. Briggs looked at him critically. "No, you can't," she said positively. "You may be the man, for all I know, but in my opinion you are too old!"

Ronaldo stood with open mouth looking at the door that had slammed in his face. He had come to ask Miss Sally to pay for the broken casseroles.

The ensuing weeks were weeks of trial for Mrs. Briggs. Her labors as amateur matchmaker had been tremendously increased by the thoughts of Monboddoo; but she shifted the men he had made possible as well as she could. Potter Winch and Henry O'Toole were never invited to the house; but the little parlor rivaled a Y. M. C. A. parlor as a meeting place for the young men of Kilo.

Sally objected, and begged her mother to desist, but Mrs. Briggs, with the stubbornness of an old lady, clung to her idea, and every time she went downtown she invited two or more young men to "come up and spend the evening," and in a town like Kilo, where amusements were rare, an evening with Sally playing the melodeon, and ending with a "treat" of coffee and ice cream, was worth while. But John Endricksen did not come. He always declined the invitations politely.

"John don't come any more," Mrs. Briggs complained one day.

"John understands," was all Sally would say.

The summer passed, with the usual number of strawberry festivals for the always-needy church, and the other charity fairs and affairs, in all of which Sally had her part; and it was after one of these that she came home radiant.

"Mother," she said, "I am going to be married!"

"Land sakes!" exclaimed Mrs. Briggs. "Has John——"

"No, it is not John," said Sally. "It is not John, you dear matchmaker!"

"Well," said Mrs. Briggs, "Sam Flig-gis isn't handsome, but——"

"It isn't Sam," said Sally.

"Peter Wildasin? Joe Wheelock? Morton Vesey? Walt Connor? Jim Feldstein? Roger Parkins? Bud Farnsworth? Ham Glover?"

"No. None of them, mother," said Sally.

"Do you mean to say it is one of them old Wickworths?" exclaimed Mrs. Briggs.

"No. It is not a Wickworth," said Sally.

"Sally Briggs," said her mother, "do you mean to tell me you are going to marry a barber? Are you going to marry Henry O'Toole?"

"Not if I have anything to say about it," said Sally.

"Well, you are of age, Sally," said Mrs. Briggs, with resignation, "and you can marry who you choose, but I never thought daughter of mine would marry Potter Winch; never!"

"It isn't Potter Winch," said Sally.

Mrs. Briggs stared at her daughter.

"I am going to marry Frank Warburton," said Sally.

"You—you are going to marry Frank Warburton!" exclaimed Mrs. Briggs. "You are going to marry—— Why, Sally, he's the banker! I never thought of you marrying Frank Warburton!"

"I am going to marry him," repeated Sally.

"But—but how can you?" said Mrs. Briggs. "Your pa never had any thought of Frank marrying you!"

"Poor old pa!" said Sally. "Pa has so many thoughts to think, I guess he forgot to think of me marrying Frank. So Frank thought of it himself."

"Well, I don't know! I don't know!" said Mrs. Briggs doubtfully. "I dare say it will do as well, but your pa will be awful disappointed. He takes such a pleasure in thinking thoughts. If he had made it possible to come to pass, he would have been so delighted!"

She awaited his home-coming the next morning with some anxiety.

"Pa," she said, as he entered, "Sally's going to be married."

The smile in his eyes came to assist the smile on his face.

"Frank Warburton, hey?" he said, blowing out his lantern.

"Pa, how did you know that?" exclaimed Mrs. Briggs. "He wasn't one you thought of as a husband for Sally, was he?"

"Well, no," said Monboddoo, seating himself at the table. "No. Seemed like it would be sort of self-seeking in me to think of a man with so much money for a son-in-law, so I didn't do it."

"Then how did you know?" asked Mrs. Briggs, all her curiosity aroused.

"Simple as pie, ma," said Monboddoo. "Simple as pie! When I seen you wasn't satisfied with the lot of husbands I thought up as possible, I sort of specified down more narrow. I just thought of myself as grandfather of Frank Warburton's children."

"Land sakes!" said Mrs. Briggs.



AND I HAVE YOU

If you had never come into my life—
 Had never let me look into your eyes,
 Reading therein the hope that never dies
 But glows resplendent through all bitter strife—
 Then I had never known what Faith can do—
 Had I not you!

If you had never walked close by my side,
 And with those wondrous eyes, seen in my breast,
 The tiny flame that I had never guessed
 Burned there, what little good I do, had died!
 You had such faith, you faltered not. You *knew*—
 And I—had you!

If you had never shown me life is just
 Living *this* day to-day—not far ahead;
 That love is best, when all is done and said,
 Then would I still be trudging through the dust.
 Lifting your own pure soul, you lift me, too,
 While I—have you!

EVERARD JACK APPLETON.



THE DANCING LADY

By Carrington A. Phelps

WALL'S IMPERIALS," it said on the billboards and posters—at first giving the impression that it might mean a new brand of champagne or pill or cigarette. But after reading "the most extraordinary aggregation of talent and beauty ever assembled on an American stage," its true nature began to be suspected, and it needed only "dashing chansonettes, chic soubrettes, and a chorus of thirty English beauties" to convince the average inhabitant of the little Indiana town that here was the first genuine "burlesque show" of the winter season.

Wearied of a round of moving pictures, popcorn, and balloon ascensions, the community shifted its toothpick, and became alertly interested in this crisp novelty of early fall. It suddenly acquired an air of mischievous sophistication, of shrewd naughtiness, as it cocked its eye, and jerked its thumb toward the alluring announcements. Hitherto it had found itself sustained by the most innocent of summer amusements; now, through the necromancy of printer's ink, it was suddenly become a gay old dog. Messenger boys giggled mysteriously over their cigarettes, hack driver hailed hack driver with cynical allusions; the soda clerk at the "Fountain of Youth" became an unflagging informant of the evening's promise, while the constabulary were jokingly admonished to protect morals, and throughout the entire length and

breadth of the town wives regarded their lords with eyes of cold suspicion.

The first intimation of this atmospheric phenomena Trent received was the carefully casual reference of the hotel clerk to the "wheel show." When pressed he explained that the attraction was one of some fifty or more, playing in rotation a circle or "wheel" of as many burlesque houses throughout the country.

Trent's next reminder was when he raised his eyes from the menu card that evening to find them uncomfortably fastened upon by a young woman with peroxide hair who was sitting with a companion at the next table. She was quite neatly dressed in black, but she wore a too frankly false diamond brooch, a great many rings; her hair was quite too prodigal, and her face, keen and not unpretty, possessed much more delicacy of color than nature had ever intended. Trent received this general impression, and dropped his gaze.

Later, however, he found himself regarding with stealthy curiosity, not only the peroxide young woman, but several others of her kind who sat near by. They seemed very much at their ease—one of them called the waiter "George"—they all had the same unusually abundant hair, they all affected a great deal of jewelry, and they all had washed-out, tired expressions, which no amount of powder or paint seemed successfully to improve. Several, notably the more prepossessing in

appearance, were rather more expensively if flashily dressed than the others. One or two—not so comely—wore neat and shabby suits, and Trent noted that, though they also strove to emulate their prettier sisters, it was with pathetically ill success, for their shoes were well worn, their waists darned cunningly, their hats a little faded.

To Trent, fresh from four hard-working years at college, and now deep in the mysteries of bond sales, these types were new. Such theatrical people as he had met had been, aside from a certain vast assurance, much like other folk in both dress and bearing. These, however, with their curious admixture of barbaric taste and vagabondish shabbiness, of poverty and arrogance, impressed him as being distinctly novel.

He was still speculating when, wandering abroad somewhat later with after-dinner cigar, he found himself before the town "opera house." Huge posters flanked the entrance, crying gaudily the attractions of the "Imperials." A fat man in a decayed silk hat occupied the entrance, huskily admonishing the stream of incomers to make haste because this was their last chance to see the spectacular, thrilling, and stupendous performance that had been forbidden in three cities—the performance to which absolutely no ladies would be permitted.

For a time Trent watched lazily the shifting faces until, in the languid hope of whiling away an otherwise dull hour, he bought a ticket and entered. He was somewhat annoyed to find that his seat was in the front row, at the extreme left, and immediately adjoining the box. However, as the house was already packed, he made no effort to change his ticket, but picked his way over many legs, and settled down.

The audience was, as he of the silk hat had stated, of men alone. There were all sorts and conditions of men. There were timorous rustics, dapper clerks, placid laborers, and smug "business men"; there were thin-lipped youths, frankly happy fat men, sinful little old men, and wide-eyed boys.

But they were all optimistic and expectant, as they presently demonstrated by stamping cheerfully with heavy heels. Whereat five blasé individuals bearing musical instruments came out of a hole under the stage, and began playing a mad and expressionless rag-time selection. At its conclusion the audience applauded vociferously, and then instantly hushed as the lights were lowered. The five musicians crashed into a waltz song, a shrill chorus took up the refrain, the curtain rolled aloft, and the "Imperials" were on in full blast.

For a time the "Thirty English Beauties," who were actually only fifteen, monopolized the footlights' glare with the "Grand Opening Chorus," after which they marched up stage, twirled around on one leg, swung empty wooden mugs in the air, and sung perfectly unintelligible words for fully two minutes. Then they suddenly struck a "picture" pose in appealing attitudes, to which the audience applauded frantically.

Immediately there entered a gentleman and lady, attired in yachting costumes, who proceeded in forcible if ungrammatically constructed dialogue to disclose the plot, informing the audience that here was an opera company, stranded in Germany, and about to ingratiate itself into the good graces of an innkeeper who had lately inherited a million dollars.

The gentleman, who was the comedian, was really very funny, and Trent found himself laughing as heartily as any, and even wondering why the "thirty" did not laugh, too. For they went through their business of "supporting" the comedian's jokes—by chorusing a monosyllable or gesturing or even laughing—with a sort of stony disinterest that was almost comic. Two or three of the very plainest seemed really to make an effort, as if to thus counteract their lack of personal charm; and Trent observed that only those whose legs were very thin or very awkward, as though made of wood, attempted any grace in posturing. In fact, although it could not have been

very interesting, most of the girls watched the audience, some callously, some contemptuously, and some with faint, invitatory smiles.

To Trent, accustomed as he was to seeing the big musical productions, it all seemed very uninteresting, nor could he detect in the entire performance a hint of that salaciousness, the desire for which had evidently attracted so many of the audience. So far as he could discover, they had largely been made the victims of their own imaginations, actively assisted by the billboards and the gentleman of the decayed silk hat. The girls seemed to him somehow pathetic with their hollow chests, their ill-nourished bodies, their too thin legs and arms, and their tired, cynical eyes. He reflected that they were only doing their work, at some inadequate weekly stipend, just as they had probably done some other work, before the tawdry lure of the footlights had inspired them. And they would continue doing their work, in their shabby costumes, with their too thin legs and arms and their tired eyes, until the end.

What that end might be, Trent never decided, for at this juncture there danced upon the stage the most bewilderingly attractive sprite he had ever seen. She wore a yellow-and-lace dress, with yellow stockings and slippers, and a fascinating lace cap tied under her chin by a huge bow of yellow ribbon.

For a brief instant, Trent felt vaguely stunned by this little red-and-olive creature, whose magnificence might have been almost vulgar until—and he waited a fearful second—he heard her voice. It was well poised, rich, and indefinitely reassuring. Trent saw at once that his emotions were due partly to the astonishing gorgeousness of her eyes, set like black flames in the oval of her face. Youth also—youth triumphant—seemed to radiate from her, as she skipped and flashed before them, singing the ridiculous facts that she was a gay soubrette, whose occupation consisted solely in breaking hearts and consuming enormous quantities of lobster and champagne.

But when, as the "thirty" took up the chorus of the song and performed entirely unnoticed figures in the background, she began to dance, Trent's powers of analysis were routed. It seemed to him that her body, harmonized and responsive in its every line, was singing mutely, now dainty, mocking arpeggios, now limpid, leaping tones, now rippling laughter, now wistful sadness.

She danced with twinkling legs that seemed to play at supporting her; she danced with arms, and wrists, and finger tips that undulated like breeze-blown vines; she danced with her yellow ribbons, and with the tiny curls at the nape of her neck; she danced with her fluffy laces, and with her laughing mouth, with her frolicsome toes and her flashing eyes.

They watched her, not at all understanding, but dumb with delight, and when finally she leaped high and came down before them in a roguish curtsy, they did not applaud gently their approval; they roared it.

Trent's first thought, after he had collected himself, was: "Why isn't she on Broadway?" He could see her, the star of a big musical comedy, dancing and singing her impish way straight into the hearts of that sated, critical audience. He could see the frank acknowledgments of the critics, the newspaper "interviews," and, later, the piece specially written for her, with her name blazoned across the theater front in white light—or recommending the latest hair tonic in street-car advertisements.

He reflected that her charm lay not alone in her beauty and ability, but in a certain quality of frank and childlike sincerity. For she danced, and sang, and laughed as spontaneously as though it were a part of her very life itself, and not a thing of arduous practice and imitation.

She was out again now, singing for her encore what is known in theatrical parlance as a "kidding song." She selected as its object a bald old gentleman sitting in the front row across the house from Trent. The refrain was, "Please

don't tease, but kiss me, please," and when she stretched out her arms invitingly, and put a little note of pathos into her voice, the audience tittered derisively, and the back of the old gentleman's head became very red and warm-looking.

Presently some friend in the seat behind leaned forward, and poked the old gentleman with a folded newspaper. Between this and his embarrassment, the bald gentleman quite lost his wits, leaped forward, and held up his mouth ridiculously to be kissed. She leaned down, laughing, and then, just as he clutched at her, deftly eluded him, and blew him a phantom caress. In an agony of shame, the bald old gentleman sought his seat, and curled down, while the house rocked in abandoned delight.

As the orchestra began the chords of the second verse, she glanced around for fresh prey, and her eye fell upon Trent. He regarded her coldly, and in that glance they both read—war. He braced himself for the ordeal, as he felt the attention of the throng behind centering upon him.

It was his first experience of the kind, and a sudden, hot rage stirred within him that this witch should deliberately make him the unhappy means of attaining her own selfish triumph. Also, he vaguely felt that retribution of some sort was due the baldheaded man, whom he noted watching him with joyless sympathy. And instantly he conceived his vengeance.

She had come to the chorus now, and, leaning imploringly over the footlights, she sang straight down at him. It was then that James Dudley Trent, scion of a haughty and most pious house, proper and most punctilious of men, performed the act which was to shape forever his destiny. For he arose deliberately, and stepped upon the edge of the box. Balancing by outstretched arms, he edged with well-assumed awkwardness toward the stage. She watched him gleefully, singing, imploring, and wheeling, in an ecstasy of anticipated and easy victory. The house hung silent with suspense, and even the chorus became interested.

He had almost reached the proscenium when his foot caught, and he seemed to stumble. She stopped singing. He cried out sharply, swaying perilously over the orchestra pit, his eyes staring, his hands clutching at the air. She leaned forward, grasped at his hand to save him, and the next instant—knew she was caught. For immediately steadying himself, he snatched her to him, and swung her slender little form up into his arms.

"Oh—oh!" she wailed. "Oh—please—please don't—"

And there was such genuine distress, such childlike terror in her eyes that the triumph went suddenly out of his own, and left them surprised and a little abashed. Instinctively he relaxed his hold.

"Oh—I beg of you——" She did not struggle, but only looked up at him helplessly.

"I—I—pardon me——" he said stiffly, and, lifting her high in the air, he set her, amid the derisive laughter of the house, on her feet at the edge of the arch.

Now, all this took scarcely the fraction of a second, and the comedian, flying from the wings, had not come half across the stage nor the English beauties through another line of the chorus before she was in center again, singing as imploringly as ever, only this time with all her heart and soul to the gallery, which, too long neglected, well-nigh hurled itself over the rail in transports of satisfaction.

As for Trent, he grinned a little as he sat down, and through the rest of the performance thought of very little save the delicious sense of having held in his arms a sweet-smelling, powdery little butterfly—a butterfly that, as it fluttered near the wings at the final curtain, curtsied low to him, and whispered, in a perfectly human and adorable voice: "Thank you, sir."

Within a week Trent had met her; within four weeks asked her to marry him. That was his way. Once sure of a thing, he wasted no time. But he always made very sure.

He found her if anything more charming off the stage, where, in his own environment, he enjoyed the advantage of employing his choice of criteria, criteria by which, however, she seemed to appear to but greater advantage. She was young, scarce twenty, but her life had been fuller than most, and difficult. Her story was a brief one, with such few climaxes as a choir position—after suffering tragic poverty with her mother—an opportunity to go on the stage, an engagement, her first, in the Imperials' chorus, and later, by luck, the soubrette's part she had understudied. It had been a hard row, especially for a pretty girl. She never talked much of it.

Trent was frankly fascinated, and it became his regular habit to journey across such States as intervened perhaps twice a month for a few precious hours with her. And it was on one of these flying visits, while waiting to put her on her train for an all-night "jump" to the next stand, that he asked her, for the twentieth time, to marry him.

She eyed him inquisitively before answering. "You aren't in love with me, James; it's the footlights."

"Wrong. It's because you see things like that. It's you, though." He became suddenly serious. "Also, dear, it's because you are so good."

Now, man has said that to woman since the beginning, and it is not always appreciated to its fullest, even by very good women. Wherefore Miss De Vine, whose real name was Nancy McIvor, frowned faintly.

"Is that why?" she asked. "Because I've wondered. It would be different if I weren't a good woman, wouldn't it, Jimmie?" Her brows raised in whimsical interrogation.

Trent glanced at her suddenly. Then he laughed, but not before she had seen the look.

"You are good," he answered simply.

This would have satisfied most women. Not so a McIvor, with a hurt in her heart.

"Then, if I were not—a good woman, you wouldn't care for me."

He laughed again, a reassuring laugh, such as one uses to soothe children.

"I'm not joking," she persisted. "It's true, isn't it? You don't care for me enough to love me for what I am—" Her voice caught, and she put her hand up to her throat. "You only care because you think I'm good."

She stepped suddenly to the edge of the platform, and stood for a moment staring across the glittering rails. Then she faced him, and he saw that she was pale and that her lips trembled when she spoke.

"I want to say something to you," she began. "I've lied to you, Jimmie Trent; I've lied to you—and, if you care for me only because you think I'm good, you are wrong. I'm bad—do you hear? I'm bad, bad clean through; that's why I've been a success—"

And then, because of the amazed agony that had come into his face, she was silent.

He leaned to her.

"It's a lie," he cried hoarsely. "It's a lie. I don't believe it."

But his face told her he did. For almost a minute he stood there, staring in a way so mute and helpless that she had to clench her hands behind her and set her whole being against weakening. But she had taken the step, how fatal a one she was just realizing, mainly because of the pain in her heart at thought of losing him.

"You've been a little—unfair," he said at last, "and I can't help feeling it that you pretended so to me. It's only the deception that counts. Please understand that." He heaved a big breath. "But it doesn't make any difference. It's all right."

He smiled at her faintly. He was deceiving himself, and she knew it.

"You must go away, Jimmie," she said gently. "This is good-by between us." He made a quick, dissenting gesture. "Yes, it is. I know now." She was torturing herself, yet she persisted, with a kind of savage joy in her own

suffering. "You can't care the same. Why pretend to? And since I'm bad"—she laughed a little wildly—"you must never see me again, Jimmie. Never again." And she snuffled faintly, and dabbed at her eyes with her handkerchief.

"I shall see you in two weeks."

"No. We must never see each other again. N-never."

It was a bad five minutes for both of them, silent and stunned by the pain they had dealt one another, before her train came in.

"Remember. In two weeks!" he said.

She shook her head wistfully, climbed up the steps, turned to wave to him, and then ran quickly into her car. Through the window she saw him walk away, his head bowed like an old man's; and this unnerved her quite, and she sprang up to go to him, but the aisle was full of people, and Coy, the comedian, buttonholed her, and the train started swiftly, and she had to bite her lip to keep from screaming at her own sheer impotence.

Through that entire night she sobbed silently in her berth from an agony that seemed tearing her heart to pieces. Which was not exactly reasonable of her, since there had been no real necessity of her speaking in the first place, and since her work the next night was so bad as to earn a bitterly sardonic reproval from the stage manager.

For four weary months, James Dudley Trent worked as he had never worked before, in a vain attempt to erase from his mind the memory of a woman, and incidentally earned two raises in salary. Steadily the conviction grew upon him that he could never, in spite of himself, care one jot the less for the sprite who had danced into his heart that memorable night—a conviction, by the way, which would have pained Trent's mother, who had other plans for her son. Nor could Trent himself quite reconcile this final attitude of mind with that stern and Puritanical code by which he had been reared.

At first he suffered with the engrossing, bitter suffering that comes with

shallow, biting wounds. Later the pain became deeper, and wound itself about the very heart of him as she came slowly back—the little tricks of her voice, her quaint tenderness, her courage, her humor—all the myriad elements of her personality that had met and dovetailed with his own, unrealized until torn away. And finally the matter resolved itself through the slow months into an inchoate, primeval need, unselfish and imperative.

Hitherto he had experienced but the casual, quick-read symptoms of the great malady; now he felt within him the undeniable proofs of a force as much greater as it was inexplicable. He could not know that here was a matter that had largely been removed from the hands of such as he since the time his remote ancestor had beheld the first woman. And so, not comprehending, he continued the familiar struggle, dictated by his training and environment; and soon he faced the alternative of either accepting the facts of the situation or paying a certain penalty.

It came upon him one night as he paced under the relentless need within him. Wearily he had whipped over the old, tedious round of theory and self-analysis, only to reach the inevitable question of what would be the end of it. And so far as he could clearly see, there would be no end—save one that spelled a woman's name.

He paused, musing on all that it might have meant to him, to her, until there came tumbling the dreary host of the opposition, protesting ominously. He loved her forsooth! But he must not, since she had made it impossible. A man had no business effecting mesalliances; they did not happen in a careful, well-ordered life. It was his business to avoid them. Sensible, practical men did. That he loved her was unfortunate, but unimportant. Hearts would heal, life was short, society demanded certain things, time would solve all, etc., etc., etc.

Trent picked up her picture. He loved her. All else suddenly dwindled; even her face blurred under his dimming eyes. Life was now, not in the

past or the future. Suddenly he turned in his tracks, as though somebody behind him had spoken.

"What of it?"

And with this simple query came a crashing inflow of realization, like sun into an unceiled room, as, with clear vision, James Dudley Trent beheld his pride stripped and shrinking before the truth. He laughed aloud with the joy of it, and faintly pleased, moreover, at his newly acquired point of view.

That night he took a train for the West. The Chicago theatrical agencies gave him a clew, and, after a circuitous, expectant journey, he succeeded in locating the Imperials at Saginaw, Michigan. But she had left them months before, to go with "Peterkin Paul," a new musical comedy. A dramatic weekly informed him that this production was en route for the Pacific coast.

Three days later, Trent stood in the reception room of a barbarously new hotel, awaiting an answer to his card.

It seemed scarcely a moment before he fancied he heard the step of the returning page; and then, as it came down the thousand-mile hall, taking on suddenly the silken swirl of a woman's gown, he flinched, and stood there, trembling, his heart in his throat. The next instant she stood before him, a vision, in soft and clinging gray. He stared, dumb with the old marvel of her. She was a trifle paler perhaps, but with the same flame in her eyes, the same appalling necromancy in her smile that always made him feel so much a part of her. It seemed these two had forgotten such amenities as distinguish reunions, for she, too, stood silently, looking him through and through.

"I'm so glad, Jimmie."

With the old thrill of her voice, he found his tongue.

"D'you know why I've come?" he cried.

And then, before she could speak, he had hurled the words at her with all the terrible intensity they had come to mean to him. For an instant she seemed dazed by the onslaught, and held out

her hand in a little, groping gesture of protest.

"Please—I wasn't expecting——"

He waited, silenced, and she raised her head slowly, heavy sadness in her eyes, her palms turned to him with her old expressive helplessness.

"It's too late, Jimmie," she began softly. "You failed me when I needed you most." Her voice went suddenly husky. "It was the most wonderful thing in my life. Why did you fail me, Jimmie Trent? And now I'm hard, and cold, and my life is empty; and I don't seem to care." She gazed at him mournfully.

"That doesn't matter," he broke in impetuously. "I failed because I didn't realize, just as you don't realize now, but I know that nothing else matters—nothing else has a *right* to matter when it comes to mean what you do to me." He made a little gesture of intolerance. "It's *not* too late. It never was, except that it took me so long to understand. And now I've come for you. Are you ready?"

She flamed with sudden intensity.

"You shall not!" she cried. "I won't have you care for me or any one whom you believe——" She stopped in confusion.

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing." She had as suddenly cooled. "It's my fault. You'd better know it, Jimmie." She came to him swiftly, and touched his arm. "Do you remember that last night—you said you cared because I was good, and I thought you should have cared, anyhow. In spite of everything."

He opened his lips to speak, but she held up her hand.

"Oh, I know now," she went on. "I wanted too much, and yet when I saw it *did* make a difference I was glad I had told you for what it showed me. And after that my abominable pride stepped in." Her fingers picked convulsively at the lace of her tiny handkerchief. "And now, now you tell me that it doesn't matter. I didn't expect that. I had long ago given up that hope. It seems you are bigger than even I had thought you—and that's very big.

And now I'm going to try and be big, too, for I've got to set myself straight with you, Jimmie—and wrong at the same time, no matter what it costs."

She stood up straight, her hands at her sides, like some naughty child making her confession.

"Jimmie," she said bravely, "when I said I wasn't good—I lied."

"That's twice you've hurt me, dear. Now, will you marry me?"

"I'm not the one for you, Jimmie Trent. It's too late. I feel all gray, and old, and dead. Truly I do. You must go away now. You mustn't come again."

"That's all right," he soothed. "Perhaps it will change, child, dear. You can go on with your work, and if you don't care enough to marry me, why that's all right, too. It makes so very little difference, you see, because my life belongs to you, anyhow." He smiled a little wistfully. "You might even marry some one else if you wished—it would always be the same with me, because there can never be any other. It's quite out of your hands now. But I wish you'd marry me; that is, if you care enough."

She was looking past him, as though down an age-long vista of years. And what she saw there must have been pleasing, because her eyes grew bright and her bosom heaved.

"I must think," she said suddenly. "Above all else, I must be fair to you. Give me a little minute."

And she stole down the length of the great, somber room like some drifting, pearly sunray.

When she returned, she carried two tiny envelopes.

"I've decided," she said. "And I've given myself the length of the room to change my mind. And in case I changed my mind, you see, I've written two answers, one in each envelope. You are not to know, sir, until to-morrow, because to-night we dine together, just as we used to, without a hint of anything to spoil our happiness. Promise?"

She smiled her witch's smile, but he had small comfort therefrom as he

took the little missive. She crumpled the other, and tossed it aside.

She went to the door.

"Until to-night, my lord," and dropped him a mocking curtsy.

Suddenly she cried out, for he had stopped suddenly and snatched up the crumpled envelope. It would have been better had he let it lie. For, with a sickening shock, he read on the inclosed card what might have been his happiness and was now his fate—the single word: "Yes."

"I shall never read the other," he announced quietly. "And it will not make the slightest difference. As I said, the matter is quite out of your hands. To-night we shall dine together. To-morrow I shall send you flowers. To-morrow and to-morrow. But"—and his voice went suddenly hard—"I shall never ask again for what I asked you to-night."

"Do you mean that, Jimmie?" she queried, with sharp earnestness.

"I do," he answered gravely.

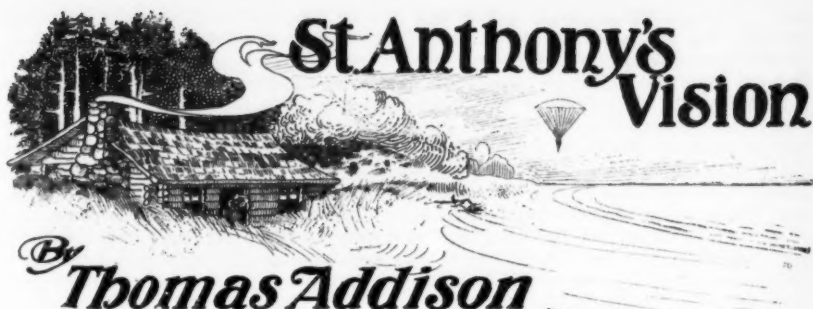
"Is it possible that you are serious?" she insisted. He regarded her steadily and with a solemnity not unmixed with suspicion, for she had paused, bent on mischief.

"Because if that be so," she continued, "I would suggest that you read the other card."

And chuckling delightedly, she dropped him another curtsy, and was gone.

James Dudley Trent, with the expression upon his countenance of one whose dignity may not be too lightly tampered with, drew forth the second envelope, and opened it. Upon the inclosed card he read the single syllable: "Yes."

Almost any night of the season, if you are so fortunate as to procure a seat, you may see the favorite of comic opera, reigning at a fabulous sum per week. She is a charming little artist and immensely popular, but it is generally conceded by those who know that her greatest success lies in a more private capacity, where, as the adored mistress of a happy family, she is better known as Mrs. Jimmie Trent.



St Anthony's Vision

By Thomas Addison

GRACIOUS FATHER!" Stiffened upright in his chair, eyes starting from his head, the ejaculation sprang from the lips of the Reverend Anthony Baker like a rocket shooting skyward.

And well, indeed, the reverend gentleman may have cried aloud his astonishment. Alone in a little cabin ten miles from nowhere—the sea mouthing at the rocky shore on one hand, a line of barren hills shutting off the horizon on the other—he saw, as he stared through the open door, the most amazing vision of his life. It was for all the world like a scene from a moving-picture show.

Framed by the doorway, and not thirty feet beyond it, there came first into view, descending from above, two tiny buff moccasins, surmounted by pale-green tights, incasing as symmetrical a pair of legs as ever mere man gazed upon.

In natural sequence, followed a bewitchingly molded bust, glittering with silver spangles, a blond-tressed head bowed forward between bare, upstretched arms, and two small, muscular hands, clutching a short crossbar depending from what might have been taken for a huge, newfangled sunshade.

The whole thing happened in less time than it takes to tell—in little more, really, than it took the Reverend Mr. Baker to hurl his startled apostrophe aloft.

The fair visitor from the blue landed lightly on her feet, the parachute collapsing upon her. Freeing herself from this entanglement, she shaded her eyes with her hand, and stood for a moment gazing seaward.

Far out over the tumbling water, and lurching drunkenly toward it, was a great, misshapen brown blotch, representing all that was left of the joy and pride of the Juniper County Fair—"Big Ben, the Monster Captive Balloon."

Even as the girl looked, the cloud of deflated silk hovered an instant above the wave crests, then settled down and billowed out upon them like a mass of uncanny spume belched up from the depths below.

"Gee!" breathed the young woman. "That was a close call, all right."

Then, as if ashamed of even this trifling display of weakness, she gave her pretty shoulders a self-disdainful shrug, and turned her attention to her immediate surroundings.

It is now necessary to relate briefly how it came to pass that the Reverend Anthony Baker was to be found in a lonely cabin on the Maine coast that late September afternoon, instead of in his own commodious apartments in Brookgrind, the most exclusive suburb of New England's exclusive metropolis.

Baker was a man of inherited wealth, and the sincere belief that he was elected to hold a torch for the guidance of a world lost in the darkness of sin. His bump of humor was so small that it

could be balanced on a pin point, and he viewed life as seriously as an undertaker contemplating the approach of his own obsequies.

Yet, withal, he was a simple, kind-hearted, honest gentleman, who never for a moment suspected his sermons were the dulllest in forty miles of preaching round about him. If his hearers suspected it—which is doubtful—they were careful not to breathe the impious thought; for the young man was worth nearly half a million, and few are they that have the courage to assert that dullness can be linked with dollars in such numbers.

A big, broad-shouldered chap was Baker, under thirty-five, with brown, oxlike eyes, and dark, waving hair. Having no vices, his face showed clear, and clean, and innocent as a babe's. So undefiled, indeed, was his appearance that some irreverent joker, visiting a member of Baker's congregation, had dubbed him St. Anthony. And the title stuck, and was used with more and more frequency until at last it came to be taken quite as seriously as was everything that concerned the reverend gentleman.

Now, St. Anthony was a bachelor, and adored by that portion of his flock which was of the opposite sex, and as yet unmarried. But, though there were many really pretty girls in the fold, for some inscrutable reason their guide and shepherd was attracted to a certain maid of doubtful visage, whose summers could be counted on little less than all of her fingers and twice her allotment of toes.

Wherever birds mate, like still seeks like, and perhaps it was the jingle of Miss Winthrope's golden eagles that called forth an answering jingle from St. Anthony's. Be that as it may, these two were drawn to each other, and all signs and portents argued a speedy union.

Dudley Winthrope, the only living parent of the lady in question, was a broker in the city, and so steeped in money-making that one could almost fancy he gave off the odor of musty bank notes. Though the preacher's attentions to Mr. Winthrope's daughter

had not reached the point of open avowals, apparently they were fast approaching that interesting stage, and the broker viewed the situation with much complacency.

He was, in fact, an unregenerate sinner, whose whitening hairs did not prevent him from casting a longing eye backward to the frivolities of youth—and, on occasion, trying to revive them. And so for some time the spouseless estate of his one ewe lamb had caused him secret fears for the frolicsome freedom of his candlelight days.

When, however, it seemed that Baker must surely be on the brink of a proposal, he was suddenly attacked by an acute inspiration to write a treatise on "Evidences of Immortality"—or some equally novel theme—and so virulent was the obsession that he felt no lasting happiness could be his until he had discharged the load upon his mind.

He talked the matter over with Winthrope, and that astute person perceived that the sooner the deed was done, the sooner his daughter's engagement could be announced.

So, as the impassioned author craved absolute seclusion for his task, Winthrope took him in his yacht to a fishing camp loaned by an accommodating friend, and set him down there amid a boatload of canned food stuff, writing paper, reference books, a steamer chair, and sundry other things necessary to the man's creature and spiritual comfort while roughing it.

The cabin was substantially built, and was fitted up with several folding bunks of the Pullman order. These could be closed during the day, thus giving more scope for action in the limited room space.

The site of the camp was at the base of a high and rocky little arm of land running out but a short way into the water, then turning abruptly southward. In the crook of this arm nestled a narrow cove, securely sheltered from nor'easters, and deep enough to float a collier. The nearest settlement was Herrington, a coast village, twelve miles lower down. Juniper, the county seat, lay inland, over the hills, fifteen miles

away. To the north there was nothing under twenty miles.

Thus, it will be seen, Mr. Dudley Winthrope had pitched upon an ideal spot for the sequestration of the man he intended to make his son-in-law, and, moreover, it would preclude the possibility of a transference of the gentleman's affections during the period of his exile.

And so when Winthrope—leaving Baker a dinghy for fishing purposes—steamed out of the cove on the twenty-fourth day of August, it was with the agreement that he should return on September twenty-second, by which time the reverend scribbler felt assured he would be ready for a triumphal re-entry into the arena of active affairs.

This, then, is how it happened that at four o'clock in the afternoon of September twenty-first, our modern St. Anthony—exhausted from his labors, yet happy in the sense of victory won—beheld the amazing vision of a comely female, clad only in green-silk tights, descending from the heavens at his very door.

It was enough to make any saint—dead or alive—tremble at the power of the Prince of Darkness.

Halfway to the cabin, the girl stopped and looked out over the tumbling waters again. The wind had hauled around from northwest to north by east, and black clouds were banking up on the horizon. A sudden chill had come into the air, and the girl shivered a little as it struck her bare neck and arms.

She turned her gaze upon the Reverend Mr. Baker, who, like one in a trance, sat glued to his steamer chair, his eyes fastened on the apparition before him. For a long minute, the young woman surveyed the man with a wisdom born of much experience crowded into a few brief years. Then she smiled and nodded to him, and came up to the door.

"Howdy," she said, in friendly salutation.

Baker did not stir. For the moment, he was absolutely bereft of mind and motion. The girl, seeing how it was

with him, laughed softly—and her sweet contralto voice was good to hear.

"I've got you going some, I guess," she went on, "dropping in like this without sending you a card beforehand. But it's a way we have in our business. Only to-day we slipped a cog, and I came near dropping in the drink"—waving her hand to seaward—"instead of here. Cutting it pretty fine, wasn't it?"

Baker was recovering. His eyes blinked, and his mouth opened, though no sound issued from it.

"It's kicking up a nasty rumpus over yonder," continued the girl. "Going to be a wet night, I reckon. And it's turning kinder cool. Any objection to my coming in and sitting down a while?"

With an effort, the clergyman pulled himself together.

"N-no, of course not," he stammered, getting clumsily to his feet. "I—I beg your pardon, but I—I could not at first believe my eyes. Er—take this chair, won't you? And—"

He broke off, looking distractedly around him—anywhere, everywhere, except at the slim, shapely figure that approached the proffered chair. He was such a picture of embarrassment, uncertainty, and perplexity that his own mother would not have known him.

He was assailed by a thousand confusing thoughts, a multitude of vague alarms, a legion of harassing fears. Here he was alone with a young and pretty woman, in less than an apology for clothing—and a storm brewing—and night coming on—and, merciful Heaven, Winthrope due to-morrow! Oh, if he were only here now! But to-morrow! What would Winthrope say of him? What could he say to Winthrope?

"Look here," cried his guest suddenly, "ain't there any womenfolks about—none near here?"

"No!" groaned St. Anthony, still keeping his eyes averted. "I am all alone. And it is twelve miles to the nearest habitation."

"Gee!" observed the other curtly. Then: "Well, I reckon we can rub along somehow. Jim'll be here by morn-

ing; maybe sooner. He's hunting for me now."

She stood for a moment curiously surveying the room.

"Jim?" questioned Baker dolefully.

"Who is Jim, please?"

"My old man—hubby, you know."

She drew the chair away from the door, and into the shadows, farther back in the cabin. Then she slid down into it, and stretched up her rounded arms over her head with the self-satisfied sigh of one whose labors for the day are over.

"Ain't you married?" she asked lazily.

Baker shook his head. He wished now he was, and that his wife was present to protect him. For into his mind flashed certain newspaper stories of derelict preachers who had figured in sensational episodes, the reading of which had brought the blush to his cheek and shame to his heart. Could it be that he—called St. Anthony, and as innocent—would thus be pilloried in the public prints?

He stepped to the door, and looked out. Yes, the storm was rising fast. He could never make it to Herrington in the miserable little punt Winthrop had left him. And over the hills to Juniper—good gracious, he would be lost before he had made a mile!

The smooth contralto voice from the chair broke in upon his agonized reflections.

"Don't take it so hard, Mr.— Say, what's your name?"

"Baker," he mumbled over his shoulder.

"Last name, ain't it? What's the front one? Mine is Nancy."

"Mine," responded the wretched divine, "is Anthony."

He came back from the door, and, placing a stool at the other side of the room from the girl, sat down, not exactly with his back to her, but as near it as his innate sense of politeness would permit.

By this time the little woman had sized up her host to a dot, and was serenely sure of her ground. Used to the gaze of thousands, her scanty at-

tire did not embarrass her. It was inconvenient, to be sure—under the circumstances—but this she intended to remedy shortly. For the moment, rejoicing in her narrow escape from a terrible death, and feeling safe and fairly comfortable, and being also very young and carefree, she felt the spirit of mischief descending upon her, and resolved to give it full play.

She dropped her arms from her head, and, whether by accident, or with artful design, down came the wind-blown tresses, to the small clatter of hairpins on the floor, and fell all around her.

"So," she exclaimed softly, "your name is Anthony! I used to have a beau by that name—before I was married—only I called him Tony."

Baker stole a glance at the girl sitting there shrouded in her golden hair, her slender limbs extended full length in the chair, her deep-blue eyes' mocking his discomfiture. For an instant he felt strangely stirred, and then, panic-stricken, guiltily shifted his gaze to his feet, and shuffled them uneasily.

The girl laughed teasingly.

"I ain't going to tell you my last name," she declared, "and so you'll have to call me Nancy. And I'm going to call you Tony. It's only for this one night, you know, and then we'll never see each other again."

Baker breathed hard. He felt as though he were in the clutch of some dreadful nightmare that he could not shake off, which was to go on forever, through all the ages. Another man would have seen the humor of the situation, but to Baker it was all as black as the pit eternal. He could not even pray; could only sit in silence, and suffer the tortures of the damned.

"Now, Tony," proceeded the sprite in the steamer chair, "please don't take it so hard. I ain't going to bite you. I'm going to tell you how I happened to blow in here, then you've got to tell me what's your lay. And then"—glancing at the stove in the corner, and the array of canned goods on the nearby shelves—"we'll have some eats; and, if you've got a deck of cards, I'll play you seven-up till daylight."

A groan burst from St. Anthony's parched lips.

"I do not play cards," he said huskily, "and—and I think I will see if I cannot row down to Herrington, and leave you here to make yourself as comfortable as the—the conditions will permit."

As if to flout this good intention, a howling blast bore down upon the cabin, rattling its shaky windows fiercely, and slamming the door back against the wall until it shivered on its hinges. And then, wailing across the waters, came the rain, smiting the windowpanes in solid sheets, and blotting out all view of land and sea through the doorway. It grew so dark that the occupants of the cabin could scarcely make each other out across the room.

"I guess," observed Nancy slyly, "you'll have to pass up that little boat ride, Tony. I'd hate to have you croak on my account. And, say, if you don't mind shutting the door, we can settle down and be right comfy."

Baker closed the door, still further darkening the interior.

"Now," continued his tormentor, in her sweetest tones, "you might turn on the lights. It would be a little more—proper—wouldn't it, Tony?"

"Goodness me!" cried the startled preacher, groping his way to the table under the window near the girl. "You are really making the situation very distressing, Mrs.—er—"

He paused uncertainly.

"Nancy," supplied the other gleefully.

"Mrs. Nancy."

"No-no-no! Just Nancy—nothing more."

"But——" protested Baker.

"Say it!" she commanded. "Nancy."

"Well—N-nancy," he stammered. Then, lighting the student lamp: "This is a most—painful—predicament, Mrs.—er—Nancy. I am at a—er—loss to know just what to do."

He stood fingering the lamp, making a pretense of regulating the flame, and wondering miserably what his next move should be. The position in which he found himself appeared to him so preposterous, so altogether hopeless,

that he could evolve no means of combating it. It did not occur to him that he might rise to the occasion—as his unbidden guest had done—and make the best of it. For the worthy divine had no imagination to speak of, and could adjust himself to the unexpected about as easily as to a boil on the back of his neck.

Before him on the table lay his completed treatise on the soul's perpetuity, held down by the weight of an Oxford Bible. How bootless his labors seemed in the presence of this mere transitory, yet overwhelming, contingency! The chill sweat stood out on his brow, and, in great travail of spirit, he groaned aloud.

Mistress Nancy, who had been mirthfully regarding the bedeviled man, felt a sudden stab of compunction, and, at the same time, an odd little consciousness of seminudity.

"Say," she ventured quietly, "it's getting colder. If you've got any old duds to spare, I could use 'em. Ain't that a bath robe hanging on the wall there by you—that purple thing?"

"Yes," replied St. Anthony, a note of relief threading his voice. "I use it mornings when I go to the beach to——"

"Well, bring it here," interrupted the girl. "It's a mile too big for me, I guess, but it looks warm."

Baker obeyed the command.

"Now, hold it up while I get into it."

Baker extended the robe at arm's length, his eyes cast down at the floor.

Nancy sprang up from the chair, slipped into the bath robe, and drew it around her. It was, as she had said—"a mile too big for her." Baker stood five feet eleven; Nancy, five feet three; she was lost in the voluminous folds of the gown. It trailed on the floor; the sleeves hung inches below her finger tips; but it covered her—from top to toe—and she felt better. So did Baker.

She looked at him, and laughed outright. The clergyman answered with something remotely resembling a smile. It was as if a load had been lifted from him; that is to say, part of a

load, for he was yet burdened with a sense of present apprehension, and dark misgivings for the future.

"It's all wool," remarked Nancy gayly, "and about ten yards wide, I guess; but purple's my color. Don't you think so?"

She glanced at him archly, but her innocent coquetry met with no response. At that moment Baker could have indulged in airy badinage about as readily as an elephant can dance the two-step.

Nancy sniffed her disapproval at his silence, and fell to work upon the bath robe. She tucked up the sleeves until her hands were given full play. Then she fastened the girdle around her waist—and with it the surplus length of the garment—and drew up her shining hair from underneath the collar. With a dexterous twist or two, she laid it, coiled like a crown, upon her head.

"You'll find hairpins on the floor if you'll look for 'em, please," she said to the Reverend Mr. Baker, with a fine little air of authority. And the gentleman proceeded to gather what harvest he could of the scattered implements of the toilet.

Her hair done up again, Nancy turned upon her companion sharply.

"Now, look here," she cried, "let's talk turkey. I'm here because I can't help it. We've been showing—Jim and I—at the Juniper County Fair. Balloon act. I go up, and do the drop with my little umbrel. Jim works the windlass. Somehow the rope broke today, and Big Ben—that's the name of the old bag—went kiting. It was blowing pretty stiff up there, and, like a fool, I lost my nerve. When I came to, I let the gas out so fast that I just had time to make my getaway before Ben went flopping down in the pond. Of course, I know Jim followed at once; all hell and high water couldn't stop him; and, though I don't know when he'll get here, you can bet he's hot-footing it over this way right now, praying God I'm alive and able to vociferate."

She paused, as though to let this information sink in, and then went on:

"Ben was a second-class article when we bought him, but he cost us a thousand plunks, just the same, and it's all gone—drowned—out yonder. Now, if I'm not kicking, what have you got to kick about? Tell me that!"

This was throwing a new light on the situation, and, his feeble fancy thus assisted, the Reverend Mr. Baker began to view it a trifle differently.

"I—er—presume," he replied awkwardly, "you are right. I was thinking only of the—er—embarrassing—"

"Rats!" broke in the girl. "Forget it. I'm only twenty, and you—well, you act old enough to be my grandfather. I'm not afraid of you, and I guess you don't need a gun to keep me off. Be a sport. Just imagine we're shipwrecked on a desert island, and waiting for a message from home. If we were, you wouldn't go round moping like a chicken with the pip. You'd be a good fellow, and make the best of it. Well, it's up to you now to play the part. Go to it—I'm going to dig up something to eat."

She swept to the stove at the back of the room, and, from the pile of driftwood near by, began selecting some of the smaller pieces to start the fire with. But Baker—dazed though he was by the flood of half-jesting rebuke that had been poured upon him—sprang to her relief.

"Let me do that!" he urged. "You can do the cooking."

"Good boy!" returned Nancy cordially. "You're beginning to wake up. Now, where do you keep your things?"

"You will find tea in that canister there," pointing with the billet he was about to thrust into the stove, "and self-raising flour in the bag on the shelf underneath. There is a pail of water on that box in the corner, and in tins there is a little of everything you can think of."

The reverend gentleman devoted himself to the fire to such good effect that it soon began to give out a genial warmth. Meanwhile, Nancy bustled around, making preparations for the meal.

When she came to clearing the table,

her eyes fell upon the Bible and the pile of manuscript beneath it. She peeped at this, and, with mind suddenly illumined, turned and pointed an accusing finger at St. Anthony.

"Geewillikins! You're a parson!"

"Yes," assented that individual tolerantly.

Nancy gave a melodious little chuckle.

"Why," she declared delightedly, "in a way, we're both in the same line—sky pilots!"

St. Anthony looked decorously shocked.

"Really——" he began ponderously; but the girl cut him short.

"My, but ain't you the cut-up! You take to a joke like a hen to water. Don't you ever laugh, Tony? Or is life just one long, bad dream to you?"

St. Anthony seemed greatly taken aback. He had been standing on a pedestal for so many years that to be jolted off it, and openly mocked, by a young person clothed only in pale-green tights and his own purple-flowered bath robe, was somewhat startling, to put it mildly. He could find no words with which to answer her, but little cared Nancy for this.

She laid the Bible to one side, and took up the wad of neatly written pages.

"'The Life Hereafter,'" she read out, "'By the Reverend Anthony Baker.'"

She turned, and contemplated the minister a moment with just the suspicion of a curl to her full, red lip.

"I see now," she said, at length. "You came here—all alone—to write this stuff."

Something in her tone made Baker feel more like a convicted criminal than a prideful author. Yet to stigmatize as "stuff" the labor and thought of many weary days and nights aroused him to resentment. He crossed over to the girl, and held out his hand.

"Give it to me," he commanded. "You do not understand the motives that impelled me to——"

"I should hope not," broke in the other, "nor any one else. How long have you been here?"

"Four weeks."

"Is it done?" tapping the manuscript.

"I finished it this morning."

"Four weeks out of a lifetime," commented Nancy caustically, "to write about something you don't know any more about than I do. That's what I call a dandy stunt—and the world full of troubled people waiting for somebody to give 'em a boost! You ought to be proud of yourself. Here"—picking up the Bible, and handing it and the treatise to him—"put 'em away; I'm cross and hungry, and want to use the table."

And, leaving Baker to his own devices, she busied herself at the stove.

Night had fallen, and with it the wind, in some degree; but the rain poured steadily, swashing against the windows, and beating an incessant tattoo on the roof. Through it all came the roar of the surf dashing on the outer rocks that guarded the deep, narrow cove from the fury of the tempest, its bosom rising only in gentle, rhythmic response to the tumult of the waters without.

Ten miles to southward, a big, white steam yacht was boring her way through the storm, headed for the safe anchorage of the cove. Winthrop and his daughter, Helen, were on board. They were not due until the day following, but had decided to steal a march on the Reverend Mr. Baker, and surprise him. That the surprise would be mutual did not enter into their reckoning.

In the cabin silence reigned, Nancy flitting from stove to table, Baker sitting gloomily, toes turned in, on a stool near the door.

The girl opened a tin of cold pressed chicken, and flanked it with some pickled peaches, and a dish of graham wafers. Then, placing a pot of tea and a platter of steaming baked beans on the table, she called out:

"Come on, Tony, and feed your face. I'm going to pitch right in!"

Suiting the action to the word, she drew up the steamer chair to her side of the board, and, perching on the edge of the seat, began to pour the tea.

Baker brought his stool over, and sat down opposite Nancy. But he made no move to begin his meal.

"What are you waiting for?" demanded his vis-à-vis, pushing a cup of tea toward him. Then, in sudden confusion: "Oh, I forgot. You—you—go ahead and say it, please."

She bowed her head, but furtively watched the young man, as, with closed eyes, he invoked the divine blessing. His words were simple and earnest, and there was a certain dignity about him that, for the time, at least, compelled the girl's respect. Her face softened, and when he had finished she looked at him with cordial good-fellowship.

"I was mean to you, Tony," she admitted frankly. "You're all right, only you've got to learn to take things as they come. If you can't change 'em to suit yourself, change yourself to suit them. Now, let's put some of this fodder out of sight before we starve to death."

Nancy ate ravenously and indiscriminately. Finally, the pangs of hunger assuaged, she hitched the steamer chair around till free of the table, slid back into it, a cup of tea in hand, and prepared to abandon herself to the joys of conversation unrestrained.

The bath robe had slipped slightly from its moorings, giving more than a glimpse of the rounded throat and chest of the wearer; and, lower down, it had dropped away a trifle to each side, revealing, in part, the slim, silken-swathed legs, stretched out full length on the chair extension.

The Reverend Mr. Baker pulled his stool back from the table to a point at which that useful piece of furniture screened from his view all but the head and shoulders of his companion.

"Do you think," he ventured, "there may be a possibility of—er—Jim's reaching us to-night?"

Nancy, the light of mischief again beginning to dance in her eyes, wagged her head slowly.

"It's a toss-up. He's got to find a road, and it's a bad night, and—well, I ain't looking for him much before daybreak. And, say, Tony, I've been wondering how you sleep here. Shake-down on the floor?"

"N-no," stuttered the preacher, in

much perturbation. "Folding bunks—let in the walls—very uncomfortable."

"Oh, I see!" replied Nancy unconcernedly. Then, with sudden change of thought: "Don't you smoke, Tony? You look kinder miserable sitting there doing nothing."

"No, I do not smoke," returned St. Anthony distantly.

"No bad habits?" persisted the girl maliciously. "Don't chew, don't drink, don't swear——"

The Reverend Mr. Baker jumped to his feet; but, catching sight of the green tights on the chair extension, sat down again.

"Mrs.——" he began protestingly.

"Say it—Nancy!"

"Mrs. Nancy."

"No—just Nancy."

"Well—Nancy—I try to live as befits my calling, and to be as clean and honest as a man can."

He said it without a tinge of self-righteous assertion, and Nancy felt it.

"Sure!" she agreed warmly. "I know you do. And, Tony, I'd bet on you to a fare-you-well. I know a good man when I see him—which ain't once in a blue moon—and you're as sound as a pippin. I like you clear through, and, if you only could take a joke, I'd love you! You see, Tony"—reaching over and placing her teacup on the table—"I was brought up on jokes. My daddy made 'em for a living. Can you guess what he was?"

She looked at him quizzically; but, as he was not the seventh son of a seventh son, St. Anthony could only shake his head.

"Ever been to a circus, Tony—way back yonder, when you were a boy, and didn't give a whoop about the here-after—only just glad you were alive?"

"Yes," he made answer gravely, "I went to the circus then."

"Well," proceeded Nancy reminiscently, "my father was a clown in a circus. And he was a famous clown, Tony, and as good a man as he was a clown. You won't believe it, maybe, but he was a wise man, too—oh, very wise!—and I remember once—it was in Europe, and I was just a little girl—

a very great person—a prince, or something like that—came back to the dressing tent, after the performance, and talked with my daddy for ever so long. Lots of big people knew him and liked him, and sometimes he made them laugh so that they cried. And sometimes—when he was not performing—he could tell things that would make you cry without laughing.”

She turned soft, unseeing eyes on St. Anthony, and smiled at her thoughts.

“My daddy helped a good many down-and-outers in his day—always had a dollar to lend, or the glad hand to give—and I never knew him to speak an unkind word to a living thing, except once, when he pretty near killed a man who said something about my mother. I was too little at the time to understand, but I think I can imagine what it was. You see, my mother was living then, but not with us, and—and—

“Well, Tony, my father tried to educate me himself, but gave it up as a bad job, and sent me to boarding school. But I got tired of that, too, and ran away—back home, to the circus. You see, it was in my blood, and I raged around so that at last dad put me in training. When I was seventeen I joined the ‘Evelyn Family,’ and did the flying trapeze. Jim joined later, and used to catch me when I did the ‘Leap for Life.’”

She paused—seeing St. Anthony’s round-eyed wonder—and laughed a little.

“I’m getting your goat, all right, Tony, ain’t I? But it’ll do you good to skip back from the hereafter to the little old present, where the wheels are going ’round.

“Well, when I was nineteen—only a year ago—father died; consumption, the quick kind. And then Jim fell and broke his arm in two places, putting him out of the acrobatic game for keeps. Jim and I were going to get married, anyway, so we hurried things up a little—as soon as Jim shook his splints—and then we thought up this balloon stunt. We’ve been making good money—North

in summer, South in winter—but today’s business kinder puts a crimp in us, for we haven’t saved up much—and to get stung for a thousand bucks like this! Gee, it’s fierce!”

“I’m sorry—very sorry,” murmured Baker.

Nancy flung out her hand, as one who waves all sympathy aside.

“Oh, we’ll pull through O. K., Jim and me. It’ll take more than one old busted gas bag to put us on the blink. We’ll dig up another somehow.”

Baker edged his stool up to the table, and cleared his throat.

“But—Nancy—why not follow a less hazardous pursuit?” he asked. “Think of the terrible risk you run!”

Nancy turned a slow, indulgent smile on him.

“Tony, every time you go down the street you run the risk of a brick dropping on your coco, or a buzz wagon butting into your clockworks. But you don’t stop to think of it, do you? Well, I don’t stop to think of the risks in my line, either. When I do, it’ll be time to quit. It’s the danger signal in our profess.”

“Yes, I suppose so,” agreed Baker. “But could not you and—er—Jim make as much money in some other way?”

Nancy reflected a moment.

“It takes money to make money,” she at length pronounced judicially, “and Jim and I can’t get enough to make a start.”

“What have you in mind?” demanded St. Anthony, leaning his elbows on the table, and regarding the girl with unfeigned interest.

“Oh,” she replied carelessly, “we’ve talked about a merry-go-round—the big kind, you know, with a steam piano. Sorter tame game, but there’s lots of money in a merry if you know when and where to show with it.”

“Well,” urged St. Anthony, “how much does one cost?”

“Twelve thousand—five down, rest easy payments—but, you see, Jim and I have never been able to get our mitts on the first five. Too much dough, I reckon, to stick to our fingers.”

She laughed lightly, and, throwing up

her hands, clasped them behind her head, and gave herself up to contemplation of the cobwebby cabin stringers.

Baker, busy with a sudden thought that had come to him, made no reply, and presently, in a little, far-away voice, Nancy broke the silence that had fallen between them.

"Tony," she said, "I've told you all about myself, but you haven't even peeped about yourself. It ain't fair. I'm getting sleepy. Tell me how you got to this neck of the woods, and how you're going to get away. Maybe it'll keep my lamps open."

"A friend brought me here in his yacht, and will come for me," replied Baker. "I expect him to-morrow," he added, in a funeral tone.

"Bully!" said Nancy equably. "He can take me and Jim away, too. I wonder, Tony," she went on dreamily, "if you are anything like a parson I knew down in Georgia. He was younger than you, I guess, and too poor to get married. His salary was only six hundred a year—when he got it—for his people were just about as poor as he was. You see, he was a Methodist, and that bunch don't have to sit up nights to count their gate receipts."

"This man, Tony, didn't preach religion—just plain, everyday truths about right living that any child could understand. And he preached at one place in the morning, and drove ten miles to preach again at night. He did it in rain and sleet, and all kinds of bum weather; and wherever there was sickness or sorrow or trouble in his reach he was Johnny on the spot to give a lift. He could tell a funny story—no, you're not like him that way, Tony—and loved a joke. And, Tony"—a little quaver crept into her voice—"he died from helping nurse a young girl—a stranger to him—who had come there and fallen sick with the smallpox. They put her in the pesthouse, and no one else would go near her, except her father, who never left her."

She paused, with misty eyes and a shadowy, tender smile playing about her mouth. Baker said nothing. With arms akimbo on the table, he sat motion-

less, save for the tracing with his finger of aimless, invisible circles on the bare board. Nancy unclasped her hands, and let them fall listlessly in her lap.

"You see, Tony," she explained gently, "I happen to know all this, because—well, I was the girl. I was just sixteen. I was with the circus—in training—and Jim hadn't joined us then. It was after I got well that I learned about Henry Decker. People hated me—they argued that I had caused his death—and I hated myself, too, when I realized the loss he was. I would have gladly died to bring him back, he was so good, and true, and—and fine."

She closed her eyes, and lay perfectly still.

"I wish," said Baker presently, in a low voice, "I could think I even remotely resembled your friend, Nancy. But I do not. I have led a very useless life, I fear. My surroundings have been such that somehow I have not come in contact with those whom I might have really helped. I have been more concerned with doctrines than with deeds. I should have gone forth into the by-ways and sought out those who needed what I have to give. Nancy, I am a failure. I haven't one real fine, self-sacrificing act to my credit."

The girl opened her eyes, and a warm glow lighted up their violet depths as she looked at the young man. He sat with his chin resting in one raised hand, staring dejectedly at the teapot.

"Tony," she observed, at last, "it's a bad thing to have your wishbone where your backbone ought to be. You never can start anything that way. Buck up! Get busy! You've just done one fine thing—owned up to failure. Mighty few of us do that. I'm young, Tony, but I've seen a lot of life—more, I guess, than some of your women friends who were chewing hay when I was gumming it. When a man can dope it out that he's a failure—only himself to blame—he's got a sporting chance to make a killing before he's through."

"I think I'm on to your trouble, Tony. You were born with a silver sixpence in each mitt, and an after-dinner coffee spoon in your muzzle. Preachers

who begin the game in that way are as few as freckles on your funny bone, and still fewer have anything to cash in when they quit. It's a big handicap trying to reach out for a heavenly crown with one hand, and tote a bag of the bully boys with the other. What you want to do, Tony, is to chuck over some of your ballast. Drop it where it'll do the most good. Then you'll rise up high enough to see that it's a pretty nifty old world we live in, and what we're going to do in the hereafter isn't half so important as what we ought to do right now."

She stifled a little yawn, and wriggled around in the chair, seeking greater ease of body.

"There is truth in what you say, Nancy," declared Baker heavily. "I have much to learn—and unlearn."

"Oh, you're all to the good, Tony," she replied drowsily, "only you got started wrong—sorter left at the post. But there's always more than one event on the card. Try again, and I'll put you down as the one best bet in my book. Now, if you don't mind, I'll pound my ear for thirty seconds, and then we'll talk some more—at least, I will, if you don't feel able to keep up the rapid-fire lingo you've been letting off all the evening."

With a throaty little chuckle at this Parthian dart, Nancy turned her face aside, and almost instantly fell asleep.

For a time, Baker sat watching this girl whose careless slang was so oddly shot through here and there with niceties of speech. She was very pretty, there was no doubt of that.

Slumber had brought to her face a look of childlike innocence and purity. It was hard to believe she was a married woman; still harder to believe she was of the circus, and all this implied to Baker's austere mind. He felt bewildered, like unto one who has been caught up from the place he knows and set down amid strange surroundings. His outlook was changed, preconceived ideas were overturned, old habits of thought rudely assaulted—and all because a show girl had dropped in upon

him from the clouds, and harangued him!

But as Baker continued to gaze at her, the picture she had drawn of that other preacher came to him again, and his mind dwelt upon it and pieced out the meager outlines of her sketch until at last he saw revealed to him the full stature of a true man of God—humble, happy, hard-working, long-suffering, soul-compelling—a power for good that had lived long after he himself had passed away.

Baker rose softly from his stool, and tiptoed to a near-by shelf. From this he took paper and envelopes, and returned to the table. Getting out his fountain pen, he fell to writing. The wind had fallen now to a mere whisper, but the rain still poured steadily.

First, the reverend gentleman drew up a check, payable to bearer, for five thousand dollars. Then he indited this brief note:

DEAR NANCY: I want you and Jim to accept this loan, to be repaid only when you can easily do so. You know what the money is for—the big kind, with a steam piano. If later on you need more, won't you please come to me? You will be doing me a real favor, for I owe you—Nancy—a greater debt than you can ever owe me.

Your sincere friend,

ANTHONY BAKER.

Brookgrind, Mass.

Baker, it will be seen, had begun to "chuck over some of his ballast." After carefully rereading the note, he sealed it and the check in an envelope marked "For Nancy," and placed it in his pocket. Then, spreading out his arms on the table, he bowed his head upon them, and drifted into meditation.

He may have dozed off after a while, or perhaps it was the rattling of the rain on the roof that prevented his hearing a hail from the outer darkness. At any rate, it was not until the door was flung open—bringing with it a rush of cold air—that Baker sprang to his feet, confusedly rubbing his eyes.

"Winthrop!" he cried.

"Good gad!" exclaimed Dudley Winthrop, gazing stupidly at the scene before him.

He and his daughter, Helen, clad in

glistening oilskins, stood in the doorway as though rooted to the spot.

Nancy, tardily awaking, sat upright, staring bewilderedly at the newcomers. Then, perceiving one of them to be a woman, she clutched at the bath robe, and drew it close about her neck, with a sense of uneasiness that no man's presence could have given her. Instinctively she felt trouble was impending, and stood up to meet it. This accentuated the *bizarrie* of the situation, for the Winthropes saw at once that she was incased in an article of St. Anthony's most intimate attire.

That prematurely canonized divine, always slow to cope with a predicament, could not find his tongue, but Winthrope was not so hampered.

"What the devil does this mean?" he exploded, forgetful of the respect due the clergy. Closing the door, he advanced a step or two. "We drop in here a few hours ahead of time, thinking to give you a surprise, and, by Heaven—"

"He has given us one, instead," broke in Miss Winthrope glacially. "Come, papa. We are evidently quite *de trop*. The lady, as you see, is not prepared to receive company."

She laid her hand on the doorlatch, but her father stood irresolute.

St. Anthony threw out his arms in a gesture of entreaty.

"Just a minute," he gasped. "You—you don't understand. Nancy—er—I mean this lady, came here in a balloon."

Dudley Winthrope started, and Miss Winthrope's hand fell from the latch. The broker gave the clergyman a searching look, then glanced meaningly at his daughter.

Nancy, perceiving the trend of their thoughts, smiled disdainfully, but said nothing. She was waiting for her companion to explain.

Winthrope slowly approached the preacher.

"You say," he questioned suspiciously, "this—ah—young person came here in a balloon—a balloon?"

"Yes."

"See here, Baker," said the broker

solicitously, "you are ill, aren't you? Does your head hurt—or anything like that? Eh?"

St. Anthony looked his wonderment.

"Why, no," he replied, yet raising a hand to his head, as though possibly he might discover something wrong with it. "I'm as well as ever in my life."

Winthrope frowned blackly.

"Then, by gad, sir," he thundered, "all I can say is you have a nerve if you expect us to swallow this balloon yarn!"

"But," cried Baker, stung by the unexpected attack, "it was a runaway balloon. She—she dropped from it with a parachute."

"How interesting!" put in Miss Winthrope sweetly. "And how opportune—dropping right here, I presume, at your door?"

"Precisely," responded Baker, in fervent accord with this statement. "It was, in fact, very remarkable."

"Most extraordinary," agreed the lady derisively, still maintaining her position near the door. "Quite unheard of!"

"It was the act of Providence," declared Baker solemnly. "Otherwise, she would have drowned."

"And when, if I may ask," said Winthrope ironically, "did this wonderful event occur?"

"To-day—this afternoon—about four o'clock."

"I suppose," went on Winthrope smoothly, "your little friend dropped down in that selfsame rig she's in? Eh?"

"N-no, not—not exactly," stammered the unhappy man, remembering, with a sickening qualm, the scanty attire his bath robe concealed. "She—she—" He paused, hopelessly at a loss how to proceed.

"Tony," burst out Nancy wrathfully, "you're making a holy show of yourself! Can't you see these people think there's something shady here? Go for 'em. Tell 'em what's what!"

Her eyes blazed, and she clenched her hands as though fearing she might fly to pieces if she did not get a grip on herself.

But Miss Winthrope had had enough. "Nancy" and "Tony"! No further proof was wanting.

"Come, papa," she called impatiently, "we are wasting time. In the morning you can arrange with Mr. Baker about getting him back to Boston. Let us return to the boat."

She opened the door, but St. Anthony sprang to it, and forced it shut, brushing her almost rudely to one side as he did so.

"You—you shall not go in this way," he panted, leaning against the door. "I know—I realize—it must seem strange to find me in company with—with——"

His voice trailed lamely into silence. He would not say a word that might appear to belittle Nancy, and his wits had gone so far astray that he could not seem to rally them sufficiently to give a succinct, businesslike account of the event that had befallen him. In short, if ever a man was rattled to a finish, the Reverend Anthony Baker was that pitiable person.

Nancy came to his rescue.

"Suffering cats!" she exclaimed petulantly. "You people give me a pain in the ears. You're throwing fits because I'm wearing this old purple woolly-woolly. What do you expect—a girl to drop from a balloon in a hobble skirt? Here's the reason I'm wearing this outfit. Look!"

She threw wide open the bath robe, showing her symmetrical little figure from head to foot.

Miss Winthrope gasped, and shrank back against the wall in horrified surprise. Mr. Winthrope also gasped; but, being a mere man—and a broker, at that—his surprise was of a distinctly pleasurable nature.

"By Jove," he breathed heavily to himself, "she's a plum!"

To his regret—and it haunted him for days—Nancy infolded herself again in the bath robe, girdling up the surplusage skillfully. Then, with the air of a diminutive tragedy queen, she moved to the center of the room.

"I suppose," she said, addressing herself, with care and deliberation, to Miss Winthrope, "you are Mr. Baker's

friend? But you've got a nasty way of showing it. You're ready to think evil of him the first crack out of the box. Why don't you stick by him through thick and thin? I would, and I've known him only since sundown. He's the real thing—true blue, and a fast color. Why, there isn't a mean thought in his head. He's a simple-hearted, right-minded gentleman, and I'd trust myself with him from here to the jumping-off place. Which," she added, shooting a glance at Winthrope, "is more than I'd do with you!"

Winthrope sat down abruptly on the stool near the table, and fell to mopping his face vigorously. It was a rather hot shot to receive in the presence of his daughter, and he felt unequal to a reply.

"Now," proceeded Nancy, again addressing herself to the lady near the door, "I'll tell you why I called your friend 'Tony.' It was just to josh him. And, as I wouldn't give him my last name, he had to call me Nancy. It was great fun—to me—but I don't expect you to understand it. There are some things some people can't ever understand. You couldn't understand, I expect, how a girl can do the show act—go up in a balloon at county fairs—run the risk of drowning, as I did today—but girls do do it, and they're good girls, and make good sweethearts and good wives. And because these girls meet all sorts of men, and see them at their worst, they get so they can tell a good man at sight; and to feel they can trust and respect him, and look up to him, refreshes them as would a drink of cold water at the stopping places on a long and weary journey."

Her eyes filled suddenly, and, throwing out her hand passionately toward Baker, she cried:

"There stands such a man, and God pity you if you can't see him as I do!"

There was a moment's silence in the cabin. Winthrope was still engaged in mopping his fevered brow, but his daughter looked full and fair at St. Anthony, who, with lowered head, stood the picture of shamefaced embarrassment. And as she looked, the hard lines

about Miss Winthrope's mouth softened, and her lips parted, as if she were about to speak.

But just here there came a thundering knock on the door.

"It's Jim—Jim!" shrieked Nancy joyously, and raced to the door.

Baker opened it, and she fell into the arms of a rain-soaked, husky young fellow, who cried:

"Nancy! Thank God, you're alive!"

He kissed her ardently, and then, picking up the suit case he had dropped, entered the room, followed by a gaping, gawky youth, whose shoes squashed out water at every step.

"This," pronounced Nancy, looking proudly around, "is my husband, Mr. James Dunn."

Mr. Dunn set down the suit case in the middle of the floor.

"Glad to know you all," he said, bowing genially and generally, "and I'm thankful for your kindness to my little girl."

"Tony," laughed Nancy, pointing a slim forefinger at Baker, "the jig's up. You know my name now, but you call me anything but Nancy, if you dare!"

Then she rapidly sketched for Jim the incidents of the afternoon and evening, omitting, however, allusion to the recent misunderstanding with the Winthropes.

"And now," she wound up, "tell me how you found me?"

"Oh, I just got Bill Jenkins here and his old man's auto," said Jim, "and we followed the direction Big Ben took. Bill said there was a chance of your landing here, and I jumped at it, of course. We had to leave the machine—road gave out—two miles back, and we hoofed it the rest of the way. My," he chuckled, "but you look comfortable, old girl, in that get-up. Don't pinch you anywhere, I bet. Well, here's your own togs; but I'll be jiggered if I see how you're going to get into them."

He poked at the suit case with his toe, and looked around the little room, grinning amiably at its occupants.

"I think," vouchsafed Miss Winthrope graciously, "we would better

leave the cabin to Mr. and Mrs. Dunn to-night. Mr. Baker and Mr. Jenkins can come with us to the yacht."

"Yes," agreed Winthrope, who had recovered his poise. "We'll take you, Mrs. Dunn, and your husband, to Boston with us, if that's the way you are headed. Come, Baker, get your traps together—what you need for the night. We'll make a clean-up to-morrow. Eh?"

Later, as they were leaving for the cove, Miss Winthrope lingered at the door behind the others.

"Will you shake hands, Mrs. Dunn?" she asked, almost shyly.

Nancy looked at her a moment, then smiled.

"Sure thing!" she replied, holding out her hand. "Good night, and—good luck."

She gave the lady's hand an extra squeeze, and closed the door, laughing lightly to herself.

As Jim and Nancy were parting from their new-found friends, in Boston harbor, Baker slipped a sealed envelope into Jim's hand.

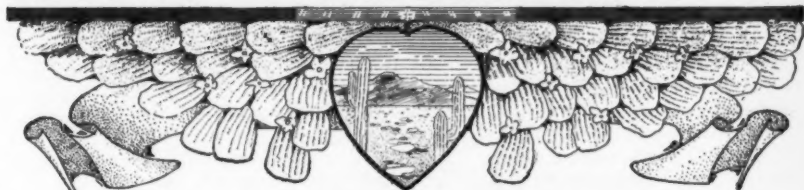
"It is for Nancy," he whispered. "Do not open it until to-night." He looked away over the rail to the waiting launch, and cleared his throat awkwardly, the while a dull flush mounted to his cheek. "And—er—Jim," he stammered, "I wonder if you would mind if I—I kissed Nancy good-by? I think she would understand. Helen would—Miss Winthrope—my promised wife, you know."

"You bet I won't mind," declared Jim heartily. "Oh, Nancy!" he shouted to the girl, who was just receiving a last salute from her hostess. "Here's some more of the same kind waiting for you."

"Why," said Nancy, as she came up to St. Anthony, "you didn't think I was going to skip him, did you, Jim? Not if I had to chase him down into the coal bunkers! Tony, come take your medicine!"

She flung both arms around his neck—and St. Anthony found the medicine good.

ROSITA *the* IMPERIOUS



By *Elliott Flower*

THE adventure with Rosita on the Lower California border began in an unusual way, and Alphabet Applegate secured thereby a reputation that still assures him deferential treatment in the vicinity of Bowlder Pass.

There was a man of the name of Pete Jordan at Bowlder Pass, and he carried a revolver that, if you happened to find yourself looking into the business end, seemed about as big as a Gatling gun.

We had not the honor of Pete's acquaintance. This was a matter of no consequence to Pete, apparently, but it was to us. We had acquired some of the free-and-easy ways of the West, and we did not demand a formal introduction before extending greeting to any man we happened to meet on the trail, but Applegate had a British prejudice against picking up acquaintances in a barroom.

Pete, whom we had never seen before, asked us to have a drink with him. Applegate declined for both of us. Pete insisted. Applegate declined again, rather curtly. Pete was all smiles and good nature, but he was determined that we should drink with him. He informed us of his determination very pleasantly, almost jocularly. There was no threat in this, just a jovial intimation that he was so desirous of our company that we really ought to humor him. Applegate thought not. Pete laughed, and the next minute we found ourselves at the wrong end of something that looked like a small cannon.

Pete was still smiling.

"It sure looks to me like drink time," he remarked.

No matter how mild-mannered a man may be, he looks unpleasantly dangerous behind a big revolver, and I hastily decided that Applegate was mistaken in thinking that this was not our regular time for taking a drink. This conclusion was strengthened by the haste with which the bartender and two patrons side-stepped out of the danger zone. They certainly ought to know whether this smiling fellow with the howitzer meant business.

Just how Applegate reasoned it out I did not know. Perhaps he was deceived by the smile. Perhaps the experience with Bill Dart at Red Rock had led him to look upon so-called "bad men" with contempt. At any rate, the leveled revolver did not seem to disturb him greatly.

"Beastly poor jest, old chap," he remarked. "It might go off, you know."

Pete was so bewildered by this refusal to take him seriously that he could only stare at the Englishman in amazement. I could hardly believe my eyes and ears.

"Put the bally thing away," said Applegate. "I cawn't get used to this sort of thing; really, I cawn't. It makes me quite nervous, I assure you."

Pete still stared. Applegate stepped up to him.

"I awsk it as a favor," said Applegate, and he reached out and took Pete's revolver. "Thanks, old chap."

he added. "Don't do it again." And he laid the revolver on the bar.

For a moment there was a silence that was almost painful in its intensity. With the exception of Applegate, every man present seemed to be too astonished for utterance, and certainly not the least astonished man in the room was Pete Jordan.

"You're sure the nerviest man I ever met up with, and I've seen some," said Pete at last. "Put it there!"

Applegate shook the proffered hand, after which Pete picked up his revolver, slipped it into his pocket, and went away, followed by the two who had moved so hastily when trouble seemed imminent.

"Silly awss," remarked Applegate. "What d'ye think he meant?"

"Do you know him?" asked the bartender.

"Cawn't say that I do," replied Applegate.

"He's Pete Jordan," said the bartender, as if that explained everything.

"Is he, now?" returned Applegate.

"Hair-trigger Pete," added the bartender. "Ever hear of him?"

"Cawn't say that I have," answered Applegate.

The bartender looked at him pityingly.

"Where you been all your life?" he asked. "Pete can shoot quicker and straighter than any man in these parts; and he does it, too. He's been in more gun fights than any two men. He got Tom Milstet, who was sure some quick, before Tom could more'n half unlimber; and Tom was lookin' for him, so it was a fair thing. He put Sandy Betts to bed for a month when Sandy had it all figgered out that he owned the town; and Sandy didn't stop to say good-by when he got well enough to mosey. Sandy was a two-gun man, too. But Pete mostly don't bother with tenderfeet—says there's no real sport in it." The bartender shook his head, indicating clearly that he had stumbled upon a problem that was too deep for him. "You sure had him locoed; you was so infernal cool and joking about it," he

went on; "but I can't understand it yet; can't make it out at all."

Applegate turned a white face to me. It seemed to dawn upon him now that he had been very close to death, and a sudden realization of that fact is unnerving to almost any man.

"D'ye know, it makes me feel a bit queer," he said. "A bracer might do some good, don't you think?"

I thought it might, for my own nerves were sadly shaken.

"I thought he was jesting, old chap," added Applegate.

"Pete don't joke much with a gun," remarked the bartender as he put out the glasses. "When he starts to draw, people hereabouts either try to beat him to it or say their prayers. It sure beats me how you done what you did. It was the careless way you done it, most prob'ly."

Applegate's hand shook a little when he raised his glass. He was becoming more and more vividly impressed with the narrowness of his escape. I was probably less affected now because I had realized the danger at the time, and had suffered my nervous shock then. Still, I was decidedly shaky. Nor did it quiet either Applegate's or my nerves any to have several excited men suddenly burst into the place.

"Where's the man that took Pete's gun away?" demanded the leader.

The bartender pointed to Applegate, and both Applegate and I looked for anything from sudden death to lingering torture.

"Don't joke, Bill," cautioned the leader, after a hasty survey of Applegate. "We want to see the man what could do that."

"That's him," said the bartender.

"Yes," admitted Applegate reluctantly, "I did it, but—"

I gave him a kick on the shins that cut him short. It occurred to me that it was better to stand on the prestige thus gained than to attempt any explanation.

The new arrivals looked him over curiously, with a strange combination of respect, doubt, and amusement reflected in their faces.

"Well, you sure don't look it," announced the spokesman at last; "but I reckon if anybody dug a hole in you, there wouldn't be nothing but grit and sand run out. You got this town plumb stupefied. We wouldn't believe it when the boys come out and told us."

There was another diversion before Applegate could frame a reply. Two more men, as excited as the others, rushed in.

"The man that took Pete's gun away sure did raise hell!" cried one of them.

"What's the matter?" asked the bartender.

"Why, Pete's so ashamed of hisself," was the reply, "that he went out and shot a Chinaman and a greaser, jest to get back his self-respect."

"My word!" exclaimed Applegate.

"Now he's askin' loud and plenty," continued the new arrival, "if there's anybody else wants to take his gun away; but there's no takers."

The same idea, apparently, occurred to Applegate and myself, and I thought I saw Applegate's knees shake a little. I did not blame him. Pete would naturally store up a grudge against the man who had humiliated him. Applegate was not armed; and, even if he were, a whole arsenal would give him no chance with such an experienced gun fighter as we now knew Pete to be. Still, Applegate managed to speak with a fair assumption of indifference.

"He'll be coming back, don't you think?" he remarked.

"Not to fight," was the reassuring reply. "Don't worry none about that. You give his gun back, and that's a courtesy Pete don't forget. You got his respect, too. 'They don't make 'em any nervier than that dude,' he says. 'I could get him,' he says, 'but I don't want to after what he done. He's too good a man.' Pete sure admires grit."

This was comforting information, and it made both of us feel better. Nevertheless, Applegate almost collapsed when we finally got away from the crowd. He was no coward, as he had proved on several occasions; but there was something about this affair, now that he fully realized its serious-

ness, that made him weak and limp as soon as he was relieved of the strain and freed from the observation of the natives.

"I thought he was jesting," he kept repeating. "He smiled, don't you know, and I thought he was jesting."

Then he would shudder, and ask if I didn't think he'd been a "silly awss." Finally, however, he turned to another phase of the subject, and asked me if it was not true that we had left the vicinity of Rocky Ridge and Westford, because there was too much that was thrilling and strenuous in the life thereabouts. I replied that it was.

"We were looking for peace and tranquillity, old chap," he went on.

"We were," I agreed.

"A restful place," he suggested.

"Quite right," I acquiesced.

"So we decided to try a balmy and soothing clime."

"We did."

"And dream, and rest, and commune with nature."

"That was the idea."

"So we started south, and kept going until we landed here."

"No doubt about it."

"Well, old chap," he concluded, "I rawther think we should have gone about the same distance the other way."

This reasoning, in view of our experience, was so convincing that we decided to start north again the next day. Forest fires, boom towns, and bucking bronchos were as nothing compared to a man who could smile genially over the barrel of a revolver, and then go out and shoot a Chinaman and a Mexican to relieve his feelings.

Señorita Rosita interfered with our plans, however. Señorita Rosita probably had another name, but we never learned it. The señorita comes into this story as a result of the little affair with Pete, which will explain why I have found it necessary to describe that at some length. It was responsible for our introduction to the señorita, an introduction that she arranged herself, the following morning, in her own unconventional way. And Pete passes out of this story as the señorita appears.

Señorita Rosita's method of introducing herself was to send word that a lady wished to see "the Englishman" in the little room that did duty as a hotel parlor. In view of this unusual method of identifying him, and of the further fact that he had not a feminine acquaintance within some hundreds of miles of Boulder Pass, Applegate thought it the part of wisdom to take me along with him. I also thought it wise, for I remembered Applegate's susceptibility to feminine charms, and the moment I saw the señorita, I decided that there was trouble ahead.

She was beautiful—there could be no doubt about that—and there was just enough of Spanish finery in her attire to give proper setting to her face and form. She was dark, of course, and her black eyes showed the languor and flash, as occasion required, that are essentially Spanish. She was also imperious, as we discovered early.

"I am Señorita Rosita," she announced as we entered, apparently considering that a sufficient identification. Doubtless it would have been sufficient for any one living in that vicinity, but it told us nothing.

Applegate bowed. "I am Charles Robert Ainsworth Applegate," he returned.

"The name is of a length," she remarked.

"It is," he agreed.

She was studying him the while, his face, his build, his dress, his movements, and she did not seem to be altogether satisfied. He was also studying her, and I noted with dismay that he seemed to be entirely satisfied. One never could tell what the resulting complications would be when a pretty woman smiled on Applegate.

"It is then a mistake that the señor took the pistol from Pete Jordan?" she suggested at last.

I saw now why she was disappointed in him. He was big, it is true, but he was ordinarily placid and rather slow in his movements. He did not look like a man who could or would take a gun away from anybody. He was annoyed,

too, by this further reference to his exploit.

"My word!" he exclaimed. "Cawn't I ever get away from that?"

"Is it?" she demanded.

"I fawned, you know——"

"Is it?"

"No," he answered. "I did it, but——"

"The señor has a quickness and a courage that do not show," she interrupted.

"Oh, I say, now——"

"The señor would also do much for a woman," she persisted. "Is it not so?"

Applegate bowed again.

"It is my weakness," he answered.

"And the señor surely took the pistol, as all say?"

"Oh, I took the bally pistol, but——"

"It is enough," she declared. "Come!"

Applegate was so plainly disposed to follow her blindly that I deemed it time to interfere.

"Look here, Alphabet," I said, "we want to know more of this."

"Come!" she repeated imperiously.

"If the señor has not lied of his regard for women, he will not refuse help to one who has much need of it. Come!"

"I say, old chap," said Applegate, turning to me, "I fawned I'll have to go."

"Don't take any chances," I cautioned. "Remember, you've had a row here!"

A night's sleep had enabled Applegate to fully regain his nerve, but he saw the wisdom of my caution. It had an unexpected effect, however.

"I cawn't leave my friend here, you know," he explained to the señorita. "He's a bally nuisance in some ways, but still I cawn't do it."

"I shall have need of two," was the reply that did not seem to me very reassuring. Then she held out her hand to Applegate, and her eyes became appealing. She was no longer the imperious beauty, but merely the helpless woman. "Come!" she pleaded.

That settled it. To argue further with Applegate would have been a waste of time. Here was a beautiful

woman who needed help, and there was nothing more to be said.

"The señor will prepare for a few days in the mountains," she announced, still ignoring me, "and we will then start."

We hastily made the necessary preparations, leaving our baggage to await our return, or to be forwarded as we might direct later. Incidentally I tried to find out something about Señorita Rosita, but time was short, and the two or three with whom I had a chance to talk could or would say little.

She lived in the mountains with an old woman of whom no one knew anything at all, but who was supposed to be her mother. She came to Boulder Pass often, and there had already been two shooting affrays on her account. She was to blame for these, apparently, only so far as she exercised her feminine prerogative of fascinating men, and she did this impartially. No man could say that he was especially favored. She and her supposed mother had lived in that vicinity only a few months, and no one knew whence they came.

This did not make our mysterious enterprise look particularly alluring to a man of my peaceful and cautious disposition. I like to know what I am doing, and why I am doing it.

I asked about blankets and provisions when we rejoined the señorita, and she assured me that we would need none. That was surprising, in view of her previous statement that we would be several days in the mountains. She was more interested in weapons, apparently, for she insisted upon satisfying herself that we each carried a revolver of satisfactory size and a plentiful supply of ammunition. For herself, I could not see that she was armed at all, but you never can tell what a woman is carrying or where.

We set out immediately, avoiding, I noticed, the main street of Boulder Pass, and turning into a crooked mountain path as soon as we were clear of the town. The señorita set the pace, and, considering the character of the country, it was a rapid one. She did not look like a strong woman, but she

was more than a match for either Applegate or myself on a mountain trail, and we were soon reduced to the humiliating necessity of asking her to go slower. Later, we had to suggest a brief halt for rest, although we could see that this made her impatient. It was amazing that there could be so much of strength and energy in so small and apparently frail a body.

"If you don't mind, señorita," remarked Applegate while we were resting. "I'd rawther like to know how long we've got to keep this up."

"All of the day," she answered.

"Fawncy that!" commented Applegate lugubriously.

"And yet another day," she added.

"My word!" exclaimed Applegate. "And for what purpose?"

"The señor shall see for himself," she replied.

We had to be satisfied with that, for she immediately set out again, and there was no opportunity for conversation while we were on the march.

Early in the afternoon we reached a cabin on the mountainside—a small and squalid cabin redolent of garlic and similar Mexican delicacies.

"It is to me the home," explained the señorita.

A veritable hag—I could not believe that she was the señorita's mother—appeared in the doorway, and said a few words in Spanish to the girl.

"It is here that we eat," we were then told. "Enter!"

We entered, but we did not remain. The air was stifling. A cook stove was going full blast, and this warmed up, and mixed, and emphasized the various odors. The señorita did not seem to mind them, but she was quick to note that we did.

"The Americanos are not of our kind in eating," she remarked, and a few words to the old hag resulted in giving us our meal in the open air.

Furthermore, we were spared the Mexican dishes, and served with canned goods—beef, corn, and peaches—instead. That made a fairly palatable and satisfying dinner, although the coffee that went with it was vile. Then

we were given a brief time to smoke, but there was no opportunity to ask questions. The hag spoke only in Spanish, and the girl kept away from us.

When we were ready to resume our journey, the hag brought out a small cartridge belt, with holster and revolver, and the señorita quickly buckled on the belt.

"Looks like trouble ahead, old chap," remarked Applegate.

"It certainly does," I agreed; and then I asked the señorita what use we were expected to make of the arsenal.

"There may come a time when we shall have much need of pistols," she replied, "but not yet."

The afternoon was much like the morning, except that we found it a little harder to keep up. The señorita seemed never to tire, which is more than could be said of us. The trail that we followed was no easy one. Indeed, it was hardly a trail at all, and could not have been followed by any one unfamiliar with it. Far below us we caught occasional glimpses of the main road, and now and then a cabin or a ranch house; but there was nothing to indicate the presence of man along our route. It was, beyond question, a trail for those who had reason to avoid the road below.

Just about dusk, however, we came upon a cabin hidden away in a ravine. It was even smaller than the one the señorita called her home, but it was cleaner and more inviting.

"It is here that we sleep," she explained.

Then she proceeded to get supper, there being, we discovered, a cupboard that was plentifully stocked with such provisions as could be kept without spoiling.

Applegate and I exchanged glances. The mystery, already sufficient to occasion disquietude, was deepening. Here was a cabin in which nobody lived, apparently, but which was well stocked with food, and unquestionably had occasional occupants. What was the explanation?

Applegate probed for a little information while we were at supper,

suggesting that perhaps the señorita was now ready to explain the nature of our mission.

"The señor shall know soon," was her reply.

"I can't help wondering, you know," he persisted, "about the bally cannon."

"The danger is not yet," she answered.

"But it might be, for you," he suggested. "D'ye know, I can't get over a beautiful woman trusting herself alone in the mountains with two strange men. If they should be beastly brutes, now, she would be so bally helpless——"

"Has the señor noticed this?" she answered, tapping her revolver. "The señor would not shoot a woman," she added significantly; "but it might be that a woman would shoot the man who presumes."

"Right-o," agreed Applegate hastily; "but I fawncy there might be a chawnce to get that. You can't be always on your guard, you know."

"There is then also this," she returned, suddenly producing a little dagger. "If the señor is of a mind to think he could presume——"

"Oh, not at all, I assure you," interrupted Applegate. "I am quite harmless, you know—a slave to woman always. I'd rawther like it," he added. "if you'd put the bally thing away. I was only thinking of the risk in trusting yourself to strangers, don't you see?"

"Does the señor still think there is risk?" she asked.

"Why, no," he answered. "I fawncy you'd be safe with anybody anywhere."

A little later the señorita rolled herself up in a blanket, and rolled into one of the two bunks in the cabin, quite as unconcerned as if there were no men within a hundred miles.

Applegate and I stepped outside for a final smoke. We had offered to sleep outside and leave the cabin to her, but she insisted that this was quite unnecessary, and proved it by going to bed as described.

"Fawncy, now!" was Applegate's bewildered comment.

"Too much mystery for me," I said. "I don't like it. I wish we'd kept out of the affair."

"But we've got to see it through, old chap," returned Applegate. "We can't back out now. I fawncy that beautiful little devil would shoot us if we tried to."

I thought it probable. At any rate, in view of the fact that we had entered into the affair blindly, we had as yet no sufficient reason for withdrawing from it.

We started early the next morning, and a little after noon we reached another cabin, also hidden away in a ravine. This one, however, was not untenanted. A man lay in one of the bunks, with water and food on a bench near him. He was unquestionably a Mexican, and not at all a bad-looking fellow, although the circumstances in which we found him were of a nature to detract from the impression he might otherwise have made. His clothing gave ample evidence that he had had some rough experiences, and had also suffered much from neglect; but this was at least in part explained by a bandaged leg.

The señorita knelt beside him and gave immediate attention to the leg, removing the bandage, applying some lotion, and then rebandaging it before giving heed to aught else.

"It has been four days, my Carlos," she said at last; "but I have come with help, even as I said I would. How has it been with you?"

"It has been bad, Rosita," he answered, with scarcely a trace of the Spanish accent that was so noticeable in her conversation: "I got about, when necessary, by hanging to a chair, but the pain of moving near tears my heart out."

"Do I not know it, my Carlos?" she returned. "Did I not see when I brought you here? And was there not the fall to make things worse, so we could not go on? But we shall now get you across. I have the help to carry you."

"Oh, I say, now," put in Applegate,

"aren't you going a bit fast? I don't fawncy——"

"The señor will help!" she declared, in her imperious way.

It looked like bad business to me, this carrying a wounded man secretly across the border; and Applegate seemed to take the same view of it, for he insisted upon knowing more.

"It is to save life," she explained. "It is to give Carlos what you call a chance. There is no other. Already they watch the border for him, and he is wounded. They will also follow from Boulder Pass when they hear, and the Pete Jordan that the señor saw will be of the first. Would the señor give a wounded man up to death?"

"But what has he done?" asked Applegate, much troubled.

"It is as nothing, señor," she answered. "He killed, but it was to save his own life. There was what you call the feud or the vendetta, and Señor Bill Smith would kill my Carlos, so it was then necessary that Carlos kill him first."

"Well, rawther," admitted Applegate.

"There is the bullet in his leg to show how needful it was," she added.

"Very good evidence, that," commented Applegate.

"If it was a case of self-defense," I put in, "why run away?"

"The señor does not think," she returned. "This Señor Smith was an Americano; Carlos is of Mexico. The friends of Señor Smith already watch the border, and as well are the revenue men told to watch. There will be the rope or the pistol only for Carlos if he is caught, and he is so hurt that he cannot fight. Is it fair?"

We had to admit that it did not seem so.

"Look, also, at this," she went on. "If it shall be found that it is a murder, there is the law to bring Carlos back. I seek for him only the fair chance. To-night we shall cross."

"Rawther hasty, don't you think?" remarked Applegate. "Of course, it——"

"To-night we shall cross!" she re-

peated, again imperious; and I was suddenly mindful of the revolver that she carried.

I noted, too, that a revolver lay within easy reach of Carlos, and that there was occasional menace in his eyes as he followed the conversation. True, we were also armed, but that was of little consequence in these circumstances. An armed man, of any chivalrous instincts whatever, is at a disadvantage in facing an armed woman. It seemed to me quite likely that we would cross.

Applegate, apparently, reasoned differently, but he reached the same conclusion. Sympathy for the man and a chivalrous regard for the woman swayed him. A wounded man, thus pursued, ought certainly to have a chance.

Then the señorita clinched her case. "The news had not yet come to Boulder Pass when we were there," she said. "When it does, they also follow, for the Pete the señor knows was the friend of Smith. It may be that they are already on the road. But at Colon they knew days ago, and the border is watched. Will the señor think how much chance the Americanos would give Carlos, of Mexico, who has killed one of them?"

We could not fail to see the point, for we knew something of the feeling toward Mexicans in that part of the country.

"To-night we shall cross," she asserted.

"We'll chawnce it," agreed Applegate.

"It may be that we shall fight," she added; "but to-night we cross or die. I know the courage of the señor."

It was not a pleasant situation for a self-respecting, law-abiding, life-loving man, but we had gone too far to back out now. I refrained from saying anything to Applegate; but I must have looked at him reproachfully, for he remarked:

"Quite right, old chap, I've made an ass of myself again, but you never can tell what's going to happen in this bally country."

We improvised a litter, and started

immediately after dark. Carlos, we discovered, was indeed badly hurt, for it was evident that he suffered intensely whenever there was the slightest jar. And there were many, for the country we traversed was exceedingly rough. Yet he never whimpered. I could not help admiring his fortitude.

The señorita acted as guide, Applegate and I following with the litter.

"I have the hope," she said, "that we get through without trouble, for we do not follow the road where they watch."

We certainly did not. We followed no road at all, and it did not seem to me that there was even a faint trace of a mountain trail. Yet she seemed to know just where she was going all the time. It would have been a difficult journey for an unhampered man in daylight, and it has always been a marvel to me that we got through at all with the litter. In spite of all we could do, Carlos must have had some frightful jars and wrenches.

We had to rest frequently; but our journey was devoid of special incident until we reached a road running at right angles to our course. The señorita motioned us to put down the litter.

"It is here that the patrol rides," she explained; "but the boundary is only a little beyond. Wait, and be ready!"

Leaving us in the brush a short distance from the road, she went out to reconnoiter. Carlos raised himself on one elbow, his revolver in readiness for action. I don't know what Applegate did, but it is my recollection that I shivered a little.

Presently the señorita returned.

"The patrol comes," she whispered, and crouched down beside us. "It is good that we now know where it is."

Two men on horseback, dimly discerned in the darkness, came along the road, and stopped almost in front of us. Carlos and the señorita had them covered instantly. I began to wonder what kind of an epitaph would be put on my tombstone, for I was satisfied that a shot would mark the end for us. Whatever happened to these two, there were almost certainly others within hearing, and how would escape be possible with

a wounded man? But it turned out that they were quite unsuspecting of our presence.

"They say the old Chinese trail crosses somewhere along here," remarked one. "I wish I knew where. It would be a good place to watch."

"Oh, I guess that old Chinese trail is a good deal of a myth," returned the other.

"Don't you believe it," insisted the first. "There's lots in these mountains that you don't know."

"Well, I don't see how anybody could get through here," retorted the other. "Come on!"

They passed on, and it became possible for me to breathe again.

An hour later the señorita called our attention to a white post.

"It is the boundary," she said. "We now cross."

Half an hour after that, just as the sun was rising, we came upon two Mexicans in a dirty little hut, and the señorita announced that our journey was ended.

"The friends of Carlos will now carry him where he would go," she explained. "The señors have been so kind, so good, and I thank them much. They have given Carlos the chance. They will now go west until they come upon a road. It will be the Campo road. Follow it north to Campo, where there will be the stage for San Diego. *Adios*. I go with my Carlos that the señors have saved to me."

It was an abrupt and unceremonious dismissal, but we welcomed it. Beautiful as the señorita was, her companionship involved a little too much of excitement and adventure. There was, however, one point upon which Applegate still desired enlightenment.

"If we had refused our aid, señorita," he suggested, "what then?"

"The señor would have returned no more to his friends," she replied.

"Fawncy, now!" muttered Applegate a little later as we were tramping westward. "What a bloody little devil!"

Johnson, of Campo, tipped his chair back against the rough stone structure

that had once done duty as a fort, but was now used as a store. It was after we had enjoyed about twelve hours of sleep.

"Been down over the line, have you?" remarked Johnson. "I suppose you didn't see anything of the bandit?"

"What bandit, old chap?" asked Applegate.

"Why, Carlos Alvara, the man that held up the bank at Colon," explained Johnson. "He was shot getting away, but they lost him in the mountains."

"My word!" exclaimed Applegate.

"Been watching the border for him ever since," continued Johnson. "Thought he might try to get through on the old Chinese trail."

"What would that be?" asked Applegate.

"Why, that's a secret mountain trail that was used for smuggling Chinese into this country," said Johnson. "They got the men that used it finally; but there don't anybody seem to know rightly just where the trail is. If anybody does, it's Alvara. The revenue men think he and a Mexican señorita have been using it again lately. Anyhow, the Chinese have been getting through in unusual numbers. Guess he couldn't get money fast enough that way, so he went after the bank. He'd tackle anything. But they'll get him this time if he's badly wounded. There won't be any way for a hurt man to get through, especially when he's carrying several thousand dollars in gold and greenbacks."

Applegate beckoned me aside.

"D'ye know, old chap," he said, "I fawned that bally litter was rawther heavy."

"And I now understand," I returned, "why those cabins were so well stocked with provisions."

"She had to get two bally fools that didn't know anything about the country or the man," added Applegate.

"And she got them," I asserted.

"Will you kick me for a silly awss?" asked Applegate pleadingly.

"I will," I agreed, "if you will do as much for me."

THE BURNT OFFERING



Frank Condon

ABOUT the time a soulless corporation took the two horse cars off the Chambers Street line and replaced them with one, Spencer and Betty walked hand in hand down the long aisle, and answered the questions. Then Betty kissed Spencer, and Spencer kissed Betty, and the minister shook hands all around, and ordered the sexton to make certain the chancel door was bolted after the bridal party had gone.

That night Spencer became formally inebriated, and in a public restaurant called the attention of the jolly wedding guests to the fact that he had just married the sweetest and dearest little woman in the world, and that his future life would be one of perfect devotion to her; that he would bestrew the roses of domestic tranquillity under her dainty feet, and that, henceforth, her pathway would be a fragrant, shaded bower of honeysuckle and hyacinths.

When he had exhausted the slender resources of his botanical vocabulary, he sat down and shed a few heartfelt tears, and soon after the one o'clock-closing law brought surcease to the wedding feast.

In the morning, the bridegroom, a trifle red about the eyes and unsteady as to fingers, opened a telegram from Chicago, and read:

SPENCER PARSONS, New York City: Heartfelt congratulations. Long life and prosperity to you and your bride.

TED.

"Who's Ted?" Betty inquired, in a slim, blue kimono dotted with flaming carnations.

"He's my pal," her husband replied, "That's good, old Ted Noble—Edward Hay Noble, of the once Gramercy Park Nobles, and Fate, playing up to its usual inane form, determined that the one man who has been nearest and dearest to me for a good many years should be chasing around out West, instead of standing up at my marriage."

"We married in some haste," Betty said meditatively. "First, you agreed to December, and this is only June tenth. If you had waited, your friend might have——"

"Don't say 'your friend,' my dear child. It sounds like some one I introduce to you while you're waiting for your cloak in the restaurant. Teddy Noble isn't 'my friend.' He's my other half. He's so much of me that I sometimes fear the result when you meet him. And it's bad luck that he shouldn't be on hand when I make the grand tie-up."

Spencer Parsons came from Paducah, which is the home of the dropped "r" and the capital of Southern chivalry. He landed in New York at the age of twenty with a deathless ambition and a similar thirst for high-proof spirits, the former an acquisition of youth and the latter a parental legacy. He worked his way up from seventeen dollars a week to seventy, from a bedroom on West Seventeenth Street with faded curtains and a three-legged dresser to

a bachelor apartment in a gingerbread palace uptown. At twenty-five, he went home to Kentucky on a vacation, and one night he met something entirely surrounded by filmy, white lace, crowned with a glorious mass of yellow hair tied in a pink ribbon, and looking at the world through two very blue, very wistful, and very innocent eyes.

"So you're little Betty Clay," he said, looking into the blue eyes and following the conversational formula to the letter. "You were in the first reader at Paducah when I was fired from school."

"I remember you," Betty answered graciously. "My folks bought eggs from yours when we were children. Do you intend to stay long in Kentucky? It must be a dreadful bore to a New Yorker."

"No place"—more formula—"where you are, can be a dreadful bore to any one. I'm going back to New York in a week, and, being given to speaking my thoughts, I might add that I'd like to take you with me."

"We expect to visit New York next month. Perhaps I shall see you then."

"If I'm alive, you will."

Then they danced, and Spencer spoke to Betty of many things, and Betty, being a young girl from Kentucky, found them new and interesting.

For a month after he returned to the city, Spencer wrote to Betty by day, and filed night-letter telegrams in the evening. She came to New York with her aunt, and stopped at a mild, little hotel off the Main Stem. He met her in the lobby of the Waldorf. They walked up Fifth Avenue as far as Sherry's, and at Forty-second Street Betty had promised to marry him.

"You must love me a great deal," she said, "and you must take care of me, and never let me be lonely or homesick. I am coming here to this frightful city, where I shall know nobody but you."

"You will never be lonesome or neglected," Spencer replied. "You are going to be the happiest girl that ever lived."

In the bachelor apartment uptown,

Spencer related matters to the pal of his bosom.

"Of course, you'll be there to help me get married," he remarked.

"I'm afraid not," Noble replied. "I'm going West, and sell the savages fine linens. I must go because the firm sends me."

A week before the day of the wedding, Ted Noble went away; and a month afterward he arrived in New York, and telephoned at once to the honeymoon hotel Parsons had selected.

"This is Mrs. Parsons," said the voice over the phone. "Of course, I know you very well. Come up at seven. Spencer will be delighted. He has spoken of you constantly."

At seven-thirty, Teddy Noble and Betty Parsons were thoroughly well acquainted, and at eight the telephone announced that Spencer was late. He would arrive at eight-thirty. He was violently surprised and pleased about the arrival of friend Ted.

They sat in the big drawing-room, and waited. Teddy told Betty stories of Spencer's hurried and successful career, leaving out chapters here and there for the good of the service. He praised the boy with the warmest words he had in stock, and Betty sat and looked at him solemnly.

"You know," she said finally, "Spencer is bad."

"No such thing," Teddy protested. "He's been a bit wild like everybody else. But he's solid gold, and his heart is as big as a squash."

"I came from a little town," she went on reflectively, "but I'm able to see a number of things. We've been married only three or four weeks, and more than once I've had to wait for Spencer in the evening, just as we're waiting now. I don't want to complain, because I love Spencer and he loves me, but you can see how it is yourself."

Teddy watched the serious little face and the grave earnestness of the blue eyes. For some unknown reason, he began to feel sympathetic.

"Some nights Spencer hasn't come home," she went on. "He has telephoned that business kept him down-

town. I know that isn't so. It wasn't business. You know what it was as well as I do."

"You mean drinking?" Teddy asked slowly.

Betty nodded.

"I knew Spencer drank terribly before we were married. But he's such a decent fellow, in spite of it, that I didn't regard it as a blight or a curse that would make us both miserable. On the other hand, I didn't marry him to reform him, because I think such things are silly. I just married him because he asked me to, and because I loved him. To-night you can see for yourself how it is. He will come in presently, and he will be full. I know it because he's done it before. When he's very full he isn't Spencer Parsons at all. He's somebody else, and he forgets that he loves me. He forgets a great many things."

Again Teddy experienced the feeling of sympathy. How in the name of all that is good could any man neglect a flower like this?

Spencer came in at nine, and welcomed Teddy effusively. He threw his arms around Betty, and kissed her.

"You ought to be ashamed to come home at this hour," she said. "And you've been drinking."

"You're mistaken," he retorted pleasantly. "I was kept downtown by a customer. Let's go to dinner."

"The dinner hour is long past," Betty said. "We'll have to go to a restaurant."

"All right, we'll go to a restaurant. Now don't be grouchy to-night. Teddy'll get the idea that you're always in that humor. Teddy, what do you think of my little wife?"

"You couldn't have done better in a thousand years," replied his pal. Silently he added: "And you're a fool to drink whisky."

The dinner was an unmitigated failure. Everything went wrong from soup to coffee. Spencer drank freely during the meal, and ignored both his wife and their guest. He made bitter, cutting remarks without any reason,

and, when the ghastly affair was over, Teddy excused himself and departed.

"That's absolutely the limit," he remarked on his way home. "That little girl can't stand that sort of treatment very long, and, if I didn't know Spencer so well, I'd put him down as a plain dog. He told me that when he married he intended to cut out the booze. He hasn't done so. I wonder if it's in him to do it."

The following morning Spencer called him up, and apologized for the incidents of the night before.

"We'll have another dinner soon," he said over the telephone. "I don't want you to have the notion that we get along badly."

For two weeks Teddy heard nothing. His own affairs fully occupied his time. In a subway train he met his pal, and in the face of the latter there was little joy.

"How's the bride?" Teddy asked.

"She's all right. We've bought a carload of new furniture, and we're going uptown farther. If you haven't anything to do this evening, let's have a little party. I'd like to have you meet the girl when she feels right."

Teddy agreed. The meeting was arranged for six in a downtown hotel.

"Nix on the drink stuff," Teddy said seriously. "You're making a bad mistake, Spencer. You've got a girl that many another man would like to call wife, and from the little information I have it looks as though you were trying to break her heart and kill her love for you."

"I know what I'm doing," Parsons replied. "I'm cutting it out slowly. She understands."

Teddy stood waiting in the hotel at six. Betty appeared shortly afterward.

"We may as well sit down," she observed.

They waited until fifteen minutes after seven, at which time Spencer came hurrying into the room. He was in a bad way, just as they both expected to find him. During the hour's wait, Betty had passed through periods of

cheerfulness and gayety into melancholy and disappointment.

"Sorry I'm late," Spencer said somewhat unsteadily. "I couldn't get here any sooner."

The three of them left the hotel without further conversation. Teddy experienced the sensations of a man who is a chief mourner at a dreary funeral. The dinner that followed was a hideous burlesque. Husband and wife ignored each other. Spencer started with three cocktails, and when the steak arrived he rose to his feet and said:

"Teddy, you can't understand this business. There are things you know nothing about. I'm going to leave you two because I can't stay here any longer. I'm sorry. Good night."

Betty watched her husband leave the dining room without comment. Teddy stared across the table at her in dumb amazement. Then the waiter brought the steak, neatly cut into small pieces.

"There's nothing to do but finish our dinner," Betty said, after a long pause.

"Why did he leave?" asked Teddy. "You two weren't quarreling."

"I presume that's the reason," she said bitterly. "Isn't this a fine sample of married life? Isn't he a charming husband, and shouldn't I be the happy bride? It's something over six weeks since we were married."

"If he were only to cut out that stuff, he'd be the finest husband in the world."

"I know he would," she replied quickly. "I have hoped all along that he would give up drinking, but so far as I can see he has made no effort. Now I'm convinced that he never will stop. I've made a mistake. I didn't think I was making the mistake when I married him, but it's too plain to doubt it. Lately he has been worse than ever. For a time I meant to put up a fight against it, but now I see it's no use. He's a victim of that thing, and no woman can pull him out of it. When he isn't drinking he is kind and considerate, but when he is drinking he's everything he shouldn't be."

"There's a way out of it," Teddy said slowly. "You see, I've known Spence a good many years. You've known him

a short time. I know that down at the bottom there's an ocean of good in him, and I think it can be dug up. I believe that you and I can stop him—can cure him permanently of the drink habit. It's only a question of your consent."

"I will do anything in reason," she said.

"Listen to this plan. Spencer is sure of you just now. You are his wife. I happen to know that there isn't a more jealous creature in New York than this same fuddled husband of yours. If he thought that there was a chance of his losing you through his damnable habit of drinking, it is a thousand to one that he would stop it. I don't mean by that to announce that you are going to leave him unless he gives up alcohol. It requires more. He must be made jealous of you through another man, and as I happen to be the closest friend he has, it looks as though I'd better be the man. My idea is to give him every chance to see that I am fond of you—that I am growing fonder every day; and, in order to bring him back to his senses with the greatest speed, you must pretend that you have suddenly discovered a great many amiable qualities in me."

"You mean, to make love to me before him?"

"Not exactly. I can't quite see the details, but of course I don't propose to let him suddenly come into a room and find me with my arms around you. I don't propose to kiss you or to hold your hand or to caress your hair. You're nothing to me but Spencer Parsons' wife, and I'm nothing to you but his good friend. But if we're to make him stop drinking it will take a hard jolt, and that's what I expect to give him, with your help."

"I don't see how you're going to do it."

"I can begin by telephoning to your apartment when he's at home. I can repeat this performance so frequently that he will be bound to notice it, and disapprove. I can send you flowers and gifts with little notes, which you can leave lying about where he will be

certain to find them. I can send him anonymous notes, calling his attention to the violent flirtation between his wife and one Edward Hay Noble, and finally, when the drama reaches its proper climax, I can have him discover us dining downtown when he thinks you are waiting at home for him."

Betty pondered for a moment.

"If you think this pretense will cure him, I'll agree to it. There isn't much hope, as I see it, but you say that you've known him longer than I have. Do you stop to think what this means to you? It means the loss of your oldest friend—if you succeed in making him jealous. You will be laying yourself open to the charge of disloyalty. You will be the perfidious, sneaking friend who tries to steal his pal's wife."

"It's worth it," Teddy said. "If I can restore your husband to you, I am willing to lose a friend."

The dinner was ended. Betty and Teddy sat and waited. There was a chance that Spencer might return, but when ten o'clock rolled around and he had not appeared they gathered up their wraps and left.

"He probably won't be at home," Teddy said. "But make the best of it. To-morrow I shall telephone you, and we begin at once the farce we have planned."

He left her in the apartment court, and continued on his way.

"I don't know whether I'm a fool or not," he mused. "They say that the man who interferes between husband and wife deserves all the calamity he gets. There's one thing certain. Betty will never know the truth."

The truth—that was it. He realized it, and faced it cheerfully. He was not pretending to love Betty Parsons. He *did* love her. From the first moment he met her, he had been falling. Sympathy for her, which he had felt in the beginning, had drifted easily into affection, and now he was in love with the wife of his friend. He longed to gather her up in his arms, and take her away. He cursed himself for the treachery to Spencer, but the feeling was something he failed to control. He wondered

again and again how it was humanly possible for any man to be unkind to this girl. She was not even a woman yet, and she was slowly becoming a cynic and a hater of matrimony.

"It's no use," he muttered. "She's Spencer's wife, and that's what she always will be. I can't have her, and I wouldn't take her from him if I could. I can see, better than she can, that this trouble is only temporary. Their little ship will be sailing on smooth waters before long."

He telephoned Betty in the morning. Spencer had come home at an early hour, and was still unconscious. Three times during the afternoon he repeated the telephone call. Within a week his system was under way and working perfectly. He met Spencer downtown frequently, and suggested little dinners which would include Betty until Spencer eyed him with suspicion. He talked of her incessantly before mutual friends. He sent her enormous bunches of flowers, boxes of candy, and books by the score. The telephone in the Parsons' apartment jangled interminably, and, after a month of steady attack, results were apparent. Spencer met Teddy on the street, and stopped him abruptly.

"Look here," he said. "This has gone far enough. I thought you were my friend, but I've found out a number of things, and from now on we travel different roads. You'll oblige me by keeping away from my wife. I don't want you to telephone her or to send her flowers. You're through with the Parsons family for good, and it's my candid opinion that you're a low-lived snake."

Teddy mumbled an incoherent reply; Spencer turned his back on him, and walked away. That afternoon, Teddy made a last telephone call, and Betty agreed to meet him.

"We're coming down the home stretch," he said cheerfully. "I met Spencer this afternoon, and I've been ordered to keep hands off. He was delightfully nasty about it, and he was cold sober. This makes the third week since he quit the stuff. You'll have to

admit that my plan has all the appearance of a success."

"You don't know what I've had to stand," Betty said. "He's very bitter toward you."

They were in the middle of dinner when Spencer walked into the big dining room. An unknown informant had telephoned him at his office, and volunteered the news that his wife was to dine with Teddy Noble. There was no scene. Spencer took his wife's arm, and led her from the room. Teddy followed a few paces in the rear. On the sidewalk, Spencer turned to him, and said coolly:

"I bought a new revolver this afternoon. The next time is the time I use it on you. That's all."

The cure was effected. The play was over. Betty and Spencer Parsons dropped out of Teddy's life, and for a while he put up with New York. Then he quit, passed his job over to the man below, drew a bale of money from the bank, and aimed himself at Europe. He became a wanderer, and when his father died, ten years later, he received the news in Hongkong.

It was necessary for him to return to America, which he did in a leisurely fashion. He reached London early in May, and sailed from Liverpool on the following morning. When the ship was four days out, Teddy, leaning against the rail, watched a figure approach him. He knew her in an instant—the Betty of his renunciation. She stared at him, and then hastened forward.

"I never expected to see you again in this world," she exclaimed. "Where in goodness' name have you been hiding for the last generation?"

"I've been traveling," he said smilingly. "You're almost the same little Betty, aren't you. I can't say that I see a single change."

"And you're the same Teddy. You're a trifle browner and heavier. You dropped off the surface of the world pretty effectually, didn't you? Never gave a thought to the ones you left behind."

"On the contrary, I gave many a

thought," he said, looking into her animated face. "You've no idea how many times I thought of you since our little reformation affair."

She leaned on the rail beside him, and gazed with pensive eyes across the expanse of blue water.

"Did you ever think," she said musingly, "that it might have been better if you had remained in New York?"

"It was because I thought it all out that I left," he replied. "It's almost ten years since that night in the restaurant, so perhaps I can make a confession to you and hide behind the flight of time. I left New York and you because I loved you. It's rather amusing now to look back and think of that month we went through—the month when I pretended to love you, and flooded your apartment with gifts. It was very easy pretense, because I loved you every minute of the time. I didn't kiss you because you were Spencer's wife, and that's the only reason. I didn't ask you to run away with me for the same reason. I wanted to."

Betty smiled, and turned toward him.

"Perhaps while confessions are the subject, I might add mine. It's very brief. I loved you."

Teddy's fingers closed on the rail, and his stare became fixed.

"You loved me," he repeated. "I never knew it—I never dreamed it."

For a long time they were silent. Then Teddy smiled faintly.

"It wouldn't have done any good," he began. "I didn't know anything about how you felt, but even if I had known, you were Spencer's wife. Nothing could have come of it. I could never have forgotten that he was my best friend, and you that he was your husband. I've often wondered whether the cure we gave him lasted—whether his reformation was total and permanent. How is he, anyhow? How's old Spencer getting along, and what's he doing?"

The smile faded from Betty's lips.

"I don't know how Spencer is getting along," she said. "I had to divorce him nine years ago for chronic drinking."

RENSHAW'S WIFE

By *UNA L. SILBERRAD*



AND so you think if one has made a great mistake—taken a wrong turning in life, as it were—there is no going back?"

"No, none."

The woman nodded thoughtfully. "Still, there is always something to be done, something left."

"There's work," her companion answered laconically.

"I meant with regard to the people about whom the mistake has been made."

"One can put them out of one's life."

She shook her head.

"One can't," she said; "they are there whether one lets them in or not. I mean the responsibility is there; one can turn them out if one likes, but one can't be quit of the fact that one did it and might have done better, perhaps."

She looked at him with eyes that were almost childlike in their directness; childlike, perhaps, in a faculty for seeing through pretenses, even the pretenses with which a man deceives himself.

"You would not do that," she said. "You would not shirk a responsibility."

He smiled. His was a grim face, with eyes hardened by disillusion and little given to smiling. But he was interested in his companion and by her earnestness, which struck him, even after a two years' absence, as unusual.

They were seated together in a palm-shaded corner, for a moment withdrawn from the kaleidoscopic throng.

The occasion was a reception, important, semiofficial, attended by rank and fashion, and as many others as could manage it. But the man had little interest in it—it was only its official character which had brought him there. He had lost touch with this sort of thing in his two years in the East. He recognized few people, and was recognized by few. And certainly he courted no recognition; for, though he knew his own world and its short memory well, he had a morbid feeling that he might yet be pointed out as Mortimer, the last husband despoiled by Jack Renshaw.

As for the woman, she was no exile; she had every appearance of belonging to her surroundings. There was something girlish about her, elaborately dressed though she was; something direct and simple in her gray eyes; something in herself which made one think of free hillsides and solitude. At least, she had that effect on Mortimer. They had drifted against each other by accident. Neither knew the other's name. He had picked up her fan or done some other trivial service which had seemed introduction enough. Unconsciously they had, as it were, moved out of their surroundings, talking, with the curious intimacy which sometimes springs up between strangers, not of commonplaces, but of the things that matter.

But it did not last long; it was only a short interlude, like passing an open window in a close room. The palm-shaded corner was well in the public eye, and soon the semisolitude there was interrupted.

The gray-eyed woman would seem to be a popular person, for shortly she was borne off by another, and Mortimer was left with a young man, who had himself tried and failed to carry off the prize.

"Who is that?" Mortimer asked, his eyes following the slim figure.

"Don't you know?" the young man exclaimed. "Why, Jack Renshaw's wife!"

Mortimer said nothing, but he was glad that few people present could speak of him in that tone as Sylvia Mortimer's husband.

"You know Renshaw," the young man went on cheerfully. "One of the Renshaws, of Derdale, eldest one. Went off with a Mrs. Mortimer something like a year ago. Guess you heard that at the time, though; Renshaw always does these things with a flourish of trumpets. You couldn't have missed hearing it unless you were in Timbuktu or Wandsworth, or some equally God-forsaken spot. Husband was in the East at the time; hasn't come back yet, I believe. I suppose he consoled himself elsewhere. If he took it like Mrs. Jack, he won't do amiss. Sensible little woman; don't care a button; went out just as usual; went out the very week after."

Mortimer did not express any admiration for this wisdom; he was wondering rather sardonically how a two years' absence had made him so far forget as to be deceived into thinking a woman real when she was only gracefully fitting her words to his humor. His contempt for his own folly was only equalled by his contempt for the wisdom now extolled to him.

But the talker, quite unaware of this, went on cheerfully:

"The Renshaws are all a bit mad," he said. "Jack's specialty is other men's wives. I dare say you remember. There was Lady Stillwell, and Mrs. Colonel Teal, and—somebody else; several somebodies, I think. That was before he married, of course; but marriage doesn't alter the Renshaws, and I guess Mrs. Jack didn't expect it to. She was prepared for an elopement or two

—Jack never could do the thing decently; always must make an exhibition of himself. He told Mrs. Jack frankly what he was going to do. Walked into her room one morning at their place in the country, and said: 'I'm going off with Mrs. Mortimer. You can stay here or go to town, as you like, and have anything she doesn't spend.' And she said: 'All right, Jack. Good-by; hope you'll have a jolly time,' or words to that effect. 'Pon my honor she did. It was all over the county.'

He laughed, and did not observe that the other failed to share his amusement.

"Sensible woman, Mrs. Jack," he went on. "She isn't anybody, you know, and hasn't anything, so she can't afford to quarrel with her bread and butter, and she knows it. She reckoned if she kept her end up, every one would be bound to back her; and, by Jove, they have! She goes everywhere, does everything; one of the most popular women going; but Caesar's wife isn't in it for being above suspicion. She's sharp enough to know her rôle's respectability, and she plays it. She's got her foot in properly, and she'll be able to dictate terms when Jack comes back."

"Is he bound to come back?" Mortimer asked indifferently.

"Oh, yes, his affairs last from six months to a year usually. His time's about up now. He'll be back soon. 'Sh! His wife!'"

He stepped forward with the design of catching Mrs. Renshaw's attention, and Mortimer moved away, and, as soon as he could, took his departure. And the paramount feeling in his mind was less pain and anger at the reopening of his own wound—a wound possibly more to his honor than his heart—than disgust with Mrs. Renshaw. Mrs. Renshaw, who had for a minute that evening beguiled him into remembering some of the beliefs he used to cherish about women. Mrs. Renshaw, who was so wise as not to suffer either in her heart or her honor.

He felt a bitter contempt for her and all her kind. Such as she helped largely to produce such as Renshaw; to dis-

satisfy them with what they had—small wonder—to depreciate their standard of women; to make it a commonplace that they wooed other men's wives, and safe and easy for them to do it, seeing that everything was overlooked for fear the recognition of it should lessen the women's cat comfort.

And Mrs. Renshaw meanwhile? She spoke a few words to the young talker, who courted her attention. She had seen with whom he had been speaking, and she asked him the man's name. The youth did not know, but said he would find out. When, after some little absence, he came back with the news, he was grinning cheerfully.

"Made a bally ass of myself," he cackled. "The chap's Mortimer—you know—and I've been talking to him about Jack, and—— Oh, I say, s'pose I oughtn't talk of it to you, either. You don't mind, though, do you?"

"Not a bit." Mrs. Renshaw smiled on him. "I don't mind a scrap what you say."

Which is a sentence which can be taken two ways. The young man evidently took it a pleasant one, for he was still in attendance when Mrs. Renshaw left with the worldly-wise woman who was her hostess in town.

It was Joan Renshaw's last night in town. To-morrow she returned to the country, to the house where she had been when Renshaw notified her of the fact that he was going to try a change of company. Why she chose to go now when the season was in full swing no one knew; and so well was she liked that, in a world where every one was busy being amused; no one criticized her act. Even her hostess, who was sorry to lose so popular a guest, did not criticize it. Joan Renshaw, it was her opinion, was no fool, and could be trusted not to do anything foolish. Joan had done very well for herself heretofore, and would continue to do so.

That was the opinion of the person most affected by Joan's return. She was one of those who knew from what Joan came—a country rectory, with a gentle, scholarly father, now dead, and a simple, homely life, where right and

wrong were matters plain as the catechism, and the horizon was very near.

Joan had traveled a long way from that now; a long way and a somewhat difficult. She had been a veritable child when Renshaw took her—saw her, loved her, won her in his headlong way. Perhaps if she had not been such a child he had not so easily won her; perhaps—but it is useless to go into that; she never did. He had won her, and tumbled her, also headlong, into a new life of which she knew nothing. Literally nothing; not even the a, b, c of the talk. She did not even understand in what way it was here correct to mishandle the English language and the ten commandments, and in what way it was impossible and unforgivable to err.

No one told her anything; she had to discover it all for herself; and she found it very difficult till she learned one great thing—to smile at everything in a world where nothing was shocking, and no one was serious. After that she found it easier; it gave her time to get acquainted with the details of the ways, and it did not so much matter if she was long in doing it. By now she had learned it all very well; so well that every one accepted her as one of themselves, and mostly forgot she had any origin at all.

But now Joan Renshaw had temporarily left these people, and gone home to the country house to which she had come a bride something more than two years ago. She had always plenty to do there, and had had all the time of her husband's absence in looking to the affairs of the estate, visiting her poorer neighbors, and superintending the gardens.

With this she was now fully busy. Possibly she knew the common talk which ascribed a twelvemonths' duration to Renshaw's passions, licit and illicit alike. Possibly, even, her own experience led her to think he was likely to tire of his chosen companion about this time, and so return to his home, if not to the woman to whom he was tied. She may have been prepared, or she may have been only following out the lesson

she had learned—that nothing was shocking and nothing serious. At all events, when, one June afternoon, Renshaw walked in as casually as he had walked out, she looked up with the same friendly smile, and greeted him as if it were but yesterday he had gone on some ordinary business.

"Hello, Joan! You here?" he said. "How are you? Very fit?"

"Very," she answered. "And you? You look tired. I'm afraid you had a tiring journey."

She half moved, as if to make some arrangement for his comfort, but he dropped into an easy-chair.

"I'm fagged," he said. "I forgot to wire for the car to meet me at the junction, so I had to come on by the slow train; beastly old cattle trucks!"

She sympathized; then added, though in evident good faith and with no hint of sarcasm:

"I hope you have had a good time?"

"Rippin'."

He leaned back and scrutinized her curiously as she sat by her writing table, the shaded sunlight playing on her white dress and fair, young face. He was not very clever, and not at all repentant in the real sense of the word; but even he felt this was not the way one in his circumstances might expect to be met.

He pondered it a moment, then came to the only conclusion possible to his experience—she was glad to get him back on any terms; so fond that she was afraid to so much as look reproach. He had found women like that before. But it was odd that she sat so quiet and spoke in the entirely unembarrassed, friendly manner of good-fellowship. He felt momentarily interested in her point of view.

"I say, are you glad I'm back?" he asked. He had absolutely no finesse. He captured women as he did by some purely physical attraction, not by any mental outfit.

"Yes," she answered; "very glad. There are a lot of things I want to ask you. The cottages in the hollow are really not wholesome."

"Damn the cottages! I don't know anything about cottages."

"I am afraid Thompson does not, either," she said, smiling. "He is a good enough agent, but he is not energetic. I have been trying to understand things myself, but I have been so busy—"

"What have you been doing?" He spoke with some curiosity, though he had never before exercised his unimaginative mind on the subject of her occupations.

"No end of things. I'm only just back from town." She went on to speak a little of her doings, engagements, and business.

He did not listen. He never did if any one spoke more than two sentences together; but he sat and stared at her, and felt an increasing satisfaction in her appearance. She was dainty and fresh in her dainty surroundings, gratifying to look at after a tiring journey. She was friendly and unexact, a welcome relief after caprice, and adoration, and the satiety of his own spent passion. She was a very agreeable change.

"You're a devilish pretty woman!" he said suddenly, apropos of nothing. "I'd forgotten how pretty."

She smiled. "I'm beginning to think I must be," she said; "so many people have told me so."

"Have they, by Jove? Who?"

"Oh, I don't know; lots of people. Not in that way, of course."

Renshaw nodded. Not in that way, of course. She would not allow it from any one but him. She would put up with no liberties. She was the right sort; a deuced pretty woman for a man to come home to. A deuced sensible one; generous, too. Dimly in his somewhat flesh-muffled mind there was an appreciation of her generosity, and a consequent, vague feeling of, not exactly shame, but perhaps his own unworthiness.

"I say, you're a ripper!" he said, making a movement forward. "And I'm a beast. I'm awfully sorry I went off like—"

But she set it aside.

"That's all right," she said readily. "I understand."

She spoke quite frankly and friend-

ly, but he sat back again without touching her.

"Tell me about things," she said conversationally, and quite unconscious of his emotions. "Where is Mrs. Mortimer?"

"In town."

"In town! Is she alone?"

"Er—yes—I think so."

Joan looked puzzled.

"She's not with her husband?" she inquired.

"Lord! No!" Renshaw answered.

"With her own people?"

Renshaw grinned.

"You don't know her mother," he explained. "Mrs. Middlemarsh Tapper—Trapper she's called. No, she isn't with her. She's—er—she's in a home or something—not well, you know."

"Not well?" Joan's voice was rather small. "And she is alone?"

"No," Renshaw answered shortly. "Of course she's not exactly alone. She's in a nursing home, I tell you. One of that sort of places people go to when they're ill, and so on. She's all right. I've seen to that. You needn't be jealous. I've seen the last of her."

Joan was far from being jealous; but before she could reassure him that that was the last thing in her thoughts, the butler came to know if his master would stay the night. The necessary orders were given; but when they were, Joan, rather to Renshaw's annoyance, accompanied the servant from the room. It was nice of her to be so solicitous for his comfort, of course, but she ought by this time to have learned that in an establishment of this sort servants, not mistresses, do things.

However, he was too well pleased to be really annoyed. He leaned back in his chair, a pleasant sense of well-being coming over him. He was glad to be home; he was glad to find Joan what she was. By Jove! She was a ripper, too! He smiled to himself as he realized that he was falling in love over again with a woman he had fallen in love with before; one he had possessed and wearied of, too—his own wife! He had no pharisaical glow of virtue at the

thought—probably because he did not value virtue at the Pharisee's rate—but he had a glow of satisfaction, the glow he always felt when he was in love and felt the object almost within his grasp. Some amusement, too, at his own folly in having been almost half an hour in her company and not kissed her, as he had every right and opportunity to do.

He'd make up for it when she came back; he'd crush her in his arms, and force kisses on her lips in the way he did when passion mastered him—a way women hated, and yet loved, feared, hungered for, and yielded to. His lips and eyes grew moist as he thought of how he had first kissed Joan in her young girlhood; how she had struggled and then succumbed. There was something girlish about her still, and it was all to do over again.

Renshaw was still delighting himself with visions of what was to be when, some time later, Joan came back. He rose as he heard her step, but stopped suddenly as she entered the room. She had changed her white gown for a traveling dress, and wore a hat and veil.

"Where are you going?" he asked sharply.

"To town."

"Town! What for? You can't go—just as I'm back!"

"You will be all right without me," she said. "I shan't be away long, but I must go."

Had he been deceived in her? Renshaw had a moment's doubt. Was this her way of getting even with him? It was just like a woman. The doubt momentarily cooled his ardor.

"Where are you going?" he demanded.

"To Mrs. Mortimer."

His jaw dropped from sheer astonishment; that was not just like a woman.

"You can't do that," he said decisively.

"Why not?"

"Because—because you can't."

Joan apparently was not convinced by such logic. She buttoned the glove she had been putting on.

"That's rather nonsense, you know," she said.

"You don't know anything about it," he returned. "Women don't do that sort of things—you can't be mixed up with it."

"Why not?" she asked again, looking up from the gloves with eyes that demanded conviction, not commands.

"Because I forbid it!" he said automatically. "I want you. I won't let you go."

"Oh, yes, you will," she answered quite pleasantly. "There is no more reason why I should not go to her than that you should not; and as for wanting—I think she will want me more than you."

She turned as she spoke. A servant had come to the open doorway to announce that the car was ready.

"I shan't be gone very long," she said to Renshaw, who stood sullen, silenced for the moment by he did not know what. "I think you will find everything all right. I'm sorry I've not been able to tell you more about things, but I can't stay now, else I shall miss the evening train."

Renshaw swore under his breath, but he did not stop her; afterward he wondered why, and cursed himself for a fool to stand stupid and abashed by her unconsciousness—or assumption of it.

And she went away, entirely unaware that she had defeated him or that she had done a difficult thing. It was not difficult. She had seen at once what to do, so it was quite easy. To her it was to know what to do that was difficult, not to do it. She had found it often so very difficult to learn what to do, and what was expected of her; but this time it was quite plain; she had no hesitation about what ought to be done; it was all quite easy and straightforward. So she went away to London that night, and to Mrs. Mortimer the next morning.

Mortimer was reading a letter. It ran:

DEAR MR. MORTIMER: I am sorry that you were unable to make any appointment with me for last week, but as it is important that I should see you, I hope you will be able to

do so this week, or next, or some time in the near future. Any place and time that is convenient to you will suit me, but it is imperative that I should see you.

Yours sincerely,

JOAN RENSHAW.

Mortimer frowned as he read. The woman was persistent—there was no avoiding her, it seemed. His former refusal to her request had been ineffectual. He would have to see her, or he would never be done with it. He had the greatest possible disinclination for seeing her; all the greater as he remembered very clearly the impression she had made on him when they had met as strangers. An impression contradicted by what he had heard, and even more recently learned, was likely to be true; it was common talk now that she was quite prepared to forgive Renshaw, and as far as possible reinstate him in the society she had taken care not to forfeit for herself.

Mortimer sat down, and wrote curtly, saying he would call upon her in town. It was August, breathless weather. No one in their senses would be in town now without reason. Her reason, apparently, was to see him. Ridiculous, as there was nothing she could have to say to him. Even moderately good taste would have prevented her from insisting on an interview. It was the worst of bad taste to presume, as she probably did, on their former chance acquaintance to demand one. Nevertheless, at the time he had appointed he went to her address.

She was not staying in a hotel, but in quiet rooms; although he felt absolutely no interest in her or her doings, he could not help wondering why she had chosen these. She rose to meet him as he entered, and, against his will, he was forced once more to observe the girlishness of her figure, the earnestness of her eyes. To observe, too, grudgingly, that she was one of those women who emanate freshness. It seemed quite natural there should be fresh country flowers beside her, that her simple dress, her very presence should suggest country airs and a feeling of home, even in these lodgings in August.

"It is very good of you to come," she said, sitting down. "I would not have bothered you, only there seemed no other way. Writing is so little use."

He bowed, and she went on with unembarrassed directness:

"It is about Sylvia—Mrs. Mortimer. What are you going to do?"

Mortimer stiffened.

"I?" he said coldly.

And, she merely acquiescing, he was compelled to say:

"I really fail to see how I am concerned in the matter. And you must pardon me if I say that I hardly think it is a subject I can discuss with you."

"Why not?"

He bit his lip.

"It is not a subject I should discuss with any one. For one reason, I do not allow that any one has an interest in it; for myself, I certainly have none."

"But that is no use!" she interrupted. "It is no use pretending things are not there; not speaking of them does not do away with them. Of course, one does not want to talk about them. It is always useless asking questions and getting advice; one always has to find things out for oneself. I mean, one generally has. But this is different, and you—I thought, perhaps, you would understand. And, anyhow, as you and I are, in a way, together in this, I thought, perhaps, it would be better if we did speak about it. What are you going to do?"

"Nothing." Against his will he felt impelled to grant her this much information.

"Nothing? Nothing? But what is she to do?"

"I really don't know. It is scarcely my concern."

"It is your concern," she retorted. "It is any one's concern who can do anything. She has hardly any money. She has no friends, no position, and she is such a poor little—well, rather a silly, little, weak thing. Something must be done."

"What?" Curiosity sufficiently overcame annoyance to allow of the question.

To Joan Renshaw the answer was simple. There seemed only two things.

"Either," she said, "to divorce her or to forgive her."

Mortimer's look was grim.

"My situation," he reminded her, "is hardly the same as yours. The solution you offer me, though commendably simple, unfortunately takes no account of the fact that either alternative, though possibly equally convenient to the offender, is equally abhorrent to the offended."

"To you?" she said, then added thoughtfully: "I'm afraid I did not think much about you. It somehow never occurred to me that you would. I was thinking of Sylvia. If you do nothing, there isn't much open to her; nothing, I mean, but—I suppose you haven't realized that? You couldn't mean to leave her to that?"

She spoke so simply that Mortimer found it hard to doubt her sincerity; but at the same time he could not allow the propriety of her intrusion in his affairs.

"I understand," he said stiffly, "that you have forgiven your husband?"

She nodded.

"Yes," she said, then: "Do you think I ought not?"

She raised her eyes with the grave inquiry of one who asks the truth, but he answered formally:

"On the contrary, I think you are very wise. I have heard your wisdom in forgiving without condoning highly commended. You maintain your position without damaging, rather enhancing, your reputation."

"Oh!" she said, and her eyes wavered for a moment. "Is that how it looks to you?"

"It is scarcely important how it looks to me," he reminded her.

"No," she said; "of course not. Only I thought, somehow, you'd understand."

"I understand that it is quite unnecessary for us to discuss the matter any further."

He rose as he spoke. He was disgusted with everything, perhaps not least with himself, and he was anxious only to end the interview.

"Yes," she said, "I suppose it is unnecessary; that is, if you mean to do nothing."

She looked at him with a sort of puzzled disappointment, which irritated because it made him feel ridiculously ashamed.

"I really fail to see your interest in the matter," he said. "My proceedings do not in any way touch or alter yours."

"Yes, they do," she assured him. "If you do nothing, I must do something."

"What?"

"I don't quite know. You are the only person who could do much good, of course; but I might do something. And something must be done. She is such a poor, pretty little thing to be left to her own resources."

"You seem to know my wife very well," he observed. "I understood that her acquaintance was almost entirely limited to your husband?"

"It was before," she answered; "but afterward I got to know her. I was with her when the baby was born, you know."

"You were with her!" He did not know, and he seemed to find the news very astonishing. "Why? What did you go for? Renshaw surely didn't send you?"

"No; he was annoyed, but I could not help that. He had done without me so long, he could do a little longer. You see, she was all alone. I had to go."

He looked at her in complete astonishment.

"You are a most extraordinary woman," he said.

She colored faintly.

"I know. Of course I don't belong—I mean to these people, your people, his people. I have tried to learn the ways. I thought I had, but I suppose I haven't, really."

"Good Lord, you needn't want to!" he exclaimed, though hardly to her. He stood a moment, looking down, trying to adjust things in his own mind. At last he turned to her with curiosity. "You're going to take back that sco— Pardon, Renshaw?"

"It seems the best thing to do," she said. "He isn't really a scoundrel. He

—well, he can't exactly help himself. He will always be falling in love unless he is looked after. I didn't understand at first. I was rather young and very ignorant when I married him. But he isn't really so very much to blame. Nor is Sylvia. She is weak, you know, and you were away; you had been away a long time. She is one who forgets and is easily led. Wrong isn't so wrong for people like that; they hardly understand. It would have been different had it been I, or you—"

She stopped, for some unexplained reason, self-conscious under his eyes. And through his mind there flashed a thought: "If it had been you and I it would have been different, and the end different." But the thought was an insult in her presence. He gave it no room.

"When Jack makes love," she went on, "women can't say no. They don't seem to have much say of any sort. I can't understand it, though I felt it myself once."

Mortimer nodded. "And you are taking him back," he said, watching her and becoming aware that a certain subtle sadness, not young at all, underlay alike her smiles and her bright simplicity. "Do you love him, then?"

She lifted her head rather proudly, and he at once withdrew the question.

"I ought not to have asked it," he said, with an apology.

"I don't think you ought," she said gently. "And, anyhow, whether I did or did not would not alter it. He is a person who cannot so well do without me. I don't think I can make him a saint or a hero, or anything of that sort; but I do think I can help him to do less mischief, and make a better thing of life. So, even if I did not want to, it would seem I must."

"No matter what the world says? Not what moral or immoral motive it ascribes to you?"

"I don't think I have thought much about that. It doesn't really matter, does it? I'm afraid I don't care—though I was sorry you do not understand."

"I think I do understand," he said quietly.

And suddenly she felt that he did, and turned from his intent eyes in case he should understand too much, and perhaps read an answer to the question he had withdrawn.

"It seems the same with Sylvia," she said, with just a trace of haste. "I thought perhaps you would see it. You couldn't make her magnificent, perhaps, but you could do a great deal. You're the only person who could. Left alone, she would have no chance. It's hard to have no second chance when once you've been down."

He acquiesced, though it is doubtful if by nature he was the sort to favor the second chance. He stood moodily silent a moment, and Joan watched him as he had watched her.

"I'm sorry about you," she said softly. "It's—it's just a wreck, I suppose. But there's the driftwood—one can make a fire with driftwood, don't you think? I believe I could."

"With you one could," he said; or perhaps it was: "You could."

She thought it must be the latter, but she did not hear plainly, for he moved to the window as she spoke.

For a little he stood there, looking out at the quiet, hot street.

"And if I don't take Sylvia back," he said over his shoulder, "what is going to happen then? Are you going to assume the responsibility of her, too?"

"I should have to try what I could do. I'm afraid it would not be much. Fortunately Jack has plenty of money. I might in time get some people to recognize her, though, of course, they would never understand."

Mortimer nodded without turning, and continued staring out as if he had forgotten he was not alone. Once he did glance round toward the empty fireplace, but Joan's face was not that way, and he looked back. Slowly, deliberately, he weighed the thing which was asked of him. He was not the man to act on impulse, or, under the influence of a moment's emotion, forget the consequences of an action. But he was a just man, and one who could be con-

vinced of wrong in himself as well as in another; so he weighed the sacrifice which had been asked of his pride, and also the sacrifice this woman was making without any asking, without admitting even to herself it was a sacrifice or a case where her personal taste came in.

He weighed the matter and fought it out; and ever between him and perfectly clear judgment and the incontestable fact that some one else's doing a quixotic thing is no reason for doing it oneself—there rose the face with the grave, gray eyes, and the knowledge that, did he refuse the burden, Joan Renshaw would, as a matter of course, assume it.

At last he turned about.

"I'll take her back," he said curtly. The thing cost him too much to do other than speak curtly.

Joan Renshaw smiled.

"I'm so glad," she said, with a curious little glow. "I was sure if it was really right you would—and I couldn't help thinking it was right. She's here, you know, upstairs."

She rose as she spoke, but he moved hastily to the door.

"I don't want to see her now," he said. "I'll write to her; but tell her, if you like, I'll have her back—but I won't have the child."

"Oh, no!" she said, and her voice softened suddenly and her face grew radiant. "Oh, no, I have him—I cannot let him go!"

Mortimer turned sharply. He was face to face with the old, divine mystery of a woman and a child, and the love that asks nothing and gives everything; and suddenly he felt that the spot whereon she stood, this woman with the radiant face and arm unconsciously curved to hold the child, was holy ground.

For a moment he held back from the hand she had offered him in farewell, then he took it and raised it to his lips. Then he went out quickly.

Ah, if it had been they two! If, by any juggling of fate, it could ever be they two, with the blessing of God upon it, and a wondrous third, which was themselves and yet another!

The Price



BEING a Tehuana of the Mexican "Isthmus," it is unnecessary to state that Xochitl—Aztec for "Flower," pronounced very softly "So-sheel"

—was next of kin to the river otter. Only a quarter of an hour ago, just before the great *coiba* floated out from behind the next bend, she was to be seen shooting like some golden fish through the deadwood and green water lilies brought down by a sudden flood. But now she had resumed her crimson skirt and sleeveless *huipilita*, and sat quietly thinking in the natural bower formed by the morning-glories, which, in this, the rainy season, festooned the trees, overran stones and scrub, and swamped the jungle with a flood of green.

Since fashion in flesh now runs to types less voluptuous than the Venus de Milo, her lithe molding would have pleased even the eye æsthetic—no less, perhaps, because, though only sixteen, it already hinted at the splendor of womanhood that was to be hers when, ten years later, most of her contemporaries had flowered and faded. The snapshot further reveals masses of black hair, framing a face delicately oval; small, straight nose; red mouth, and soft-brown eyes, set slightly oblique. So slight, indeed, as to be hardly noticeable, that wee slant yet told of ancestors who, in the dim past

before Egypt, migrated from Asia across continents long since submerged, and built Palenque and Mitla, the splendid monuments of their civilization.

Her person and lineage thus lightly touched upon, her estate comes next; and if it be asked why, contrary to the communal custom of her town, a girl of such attractions came to be taking her morning bath alone at an age when both her mother, grandmother, and a long line of their mothers before them had already borne a couple of children into the Tehuantepec world, the answer is to be looked for in the history of the said campaign.

When, after two years of irregular fighting, plus a month's heavy siege, the town capitulated to his *excelentissimo*, little more than a corporal's guard of men were left to care for some three or four thousand women; and though—after they had buried their dead and counted the living—the women set industriously to work to readjust a balance manifestly so contrary to nature, and though the stork is said to have assisted their loving labors by boy babies to order, not for a couple of generations yet would there be husbands enough to go round.

From this it should not be inferred that Xochitl had not had her chances. On the contrary, she had narrowly escaped matrimony at fourteen, first, by

the sudden twist of which, like some golden snake, she shed her clothing, and left Juan Romero, the *rural*, stupidly grinning at a handful of crimson vestures; secondly, by the clever dodging that offset the speed of his horse, till she had gained into the jungle tangles.

A year later she had been driven to cross the river, and take up her residence in a deserted *jacal* by a similar adventure with Schwend, the German trader. At this time the latter had not taken on the grossness of later years, but carried himself with the military erectness of the average young German; and, had he gone a little more slowly, paid her the usual court for a month or two, with presents and flowers, she might have yielded. But this roughness of his was supplemented by the fact that he had changed his housekeeper three times in as many years, and while the shadow of a priest seldom falls across a Tehuana's nuptials, no woman in the world hugs the connubial verities, faith and love, more closely to her heart.

To these two, a third chance might have been added if the *vomito negro* had not carried off an Indian lover at the psychological moment; and, with his death—well, it is easily to be seen that, under such conditions, three chances are full measure for even such a beauty as Xochitl; more especially when she lives alone, beyond the ken of new admirers.

It may be that some inkling of this fact was responsible for the girl's quiet this particular morning. To obtain peace she had bartered opportunity, always an unfair exchange, for when did peace make up to a woman for lack of the music that baby fingers can play on her heartstrings? Of man it has already been said that he "must have his woman, but she will do very well if she but have her children," and had Xochitl but had her child, the glance she turned on the *ceiba* might have lacked its empty brooding. As it swung this way and that, veering at the will of the flood, her glance followed aimlessly, and not until it had almost passed did she spring

to her feet, and stand, breathlessly staring at the child's crib that was lodged in its branches.

Uprooted by a cloudburst far away in the mountains, the great tree had gone tumbling down the flood, but its enormous spread of branches achieved a balance before it was shot, butt on, through and through the cabin an American mining engineer had built at the foot of its native *barranca*.

Stooping to kiss their child in its crib only last night, the American had remarked to his wife:

"Thank God, Mary! We can now count ourselves out of the woods. Some day this little girl is going to have a cool million in her own right."

Then death had come, like the traditional thief in the night, for the freak of luck that sent the crib scuttling on its castors off the upper floor into the branches served no one else. Husband and wife were swept away, along with the score of *peones* who worked in the mine, and, whatever its merits, their story must wait on that of their child.

With a movement quicker even than that which let her out of the *rural*'s rough hand, Xochitl had cast off skirt and *huipilita*, and, as she stood looking from under her hand, she was a bathing nymph done in breathing bronze. Then, as the stately dip of the tree inclined the crib so that she could see its freight, she shot, like an arrow, out from the bank.

That single dive carried her out to the tree, but as she went to pull herself up on it, her weight destroyed the balance, and it rolled over, spilling its freight almost into her arms. For some seconds thereafter, it seemed as though she would be carried under by the tangle of branches. But a dozen strokes carried her free, and a minute later she climbed out on the bank, and sat down to examine her find.

It was a white girl child; she judged, between three and four; and, while chuckling her astonishment at its milk whiteness, her soft, dark glance caressed the small, chubby limbs like the licking tongue of a mother deer. Through all, it had neither moved nor cried.

Now it lay on her lap, blue-lipped from cold and exhaustion, white and still; and, with sudden fear born of her late lonely cravings, she snatched it close to her bosom, drew her clothing around both of them, and sat for a long time huddling it in against her own warm flesh.

And presently her warmth communicated itself, flowed like an elixir of life into the child; and as she felt it stir and quicken against her heart, intense feeling quivered through every nerve. It required only the sudden, feeble cry, "Mamma!"—the same in Spanish as English—to work in Xochitl, the maid, a remarkable change. Without having experienced the troubled joys of love, or travail of child-bearing, she felt the furious flame of motherhood; and as though it, also, sensed it, the child passed at once from insensibility into deep sleep.

For a long time afterward, Xochitl scarcely breathed; just sat brooding, with love warm in her breast. Occasionally, but always with infinite care, she would lift a corner, and dare a small peep at the yellow head, plump limbs, that gleamed so whitely against her gold; and what of these tender droopings, the sprightly nymph of an hour ago resolved into a quiet madonna adorning her child.

When, some time later, the tropic sun began to shoot arrows of flame down through the leaves of her covert, she rose, and padded softly along the path to the small clearing where stood her *jacal*. So quietly, too, did she lay her down upon her own *catre*, the child was not disturbed.

Now, were the average American child to be transported in her sleep from a northern home, and suddenly open her eyes upon the split-pole siding, mud floor, and curved-palm roof of a jungle *jacal*, she might reasonably be expected to die of fright. Not only, however, had this particular babe been accustomed to dark faces from her birth, but both her first mutinous crawlings and later toddling escapes had

rendered her perfectly familiar with the rude architecture of tropical huts.

When she awoke, Xochitl was there, all ready, with a cup of warm goat's milk; and if the child noticed any change she was probably favorably impressed by the substitution of Xochitl's dark blooms for the wrinkles of Rosa, her late Zapoteca nurse.

It is true that when she awoke a second time her small baby heart urged a spell of crying for the white mother she was never to see again; but, with the wisdom of her new-found motherhood, Xochitl was also prepared for this. As the luck would have it, one of her three she goats had twin kids, and what child could remain unhappy in company of such playfellows? She toddled after them at once, shrieking her laughter at their stiff-legged prancings; and when their attractions palled, Xochitl invented a lovely game of "hide from the tiger," among the cornstalks. It is safe to say that the animal itself could not have pounced with more ease and grace than she upon the laughing child, and what of these and other diversions, it is small wonder that the yellow head dropped back to her bosom before their supper of rice, *tortillas*, and goat's milk was nearly finished.

Neither is it a matter of surprise that her fits of childish grief should fade during the succeeding days. In a wee, red skirt and tiny *huipilita*, a miniature Tehuana, she was soon to be seen following at Xochitl's heels as she carried water from the river to nourish the great gourds which—when dried and wonderfully emblazoned with red and green flowers—she sold for baskets on the Tehuantepec market.

Like all children born in foreign lands, the child had taken the alien language from the lips of her dark nurses, so her absorption into the new life was rendered easier because there was, between them, no confusion of tongues. If at first she would pause in her play to call out: "Mamma, I'm thirsty!" she invariably added the Spanish: "*Tengo sed!*" of her own volition; and very soon—aye, in little more time than was required for the American consul to

journey down and back between Mexico City and the flooded mine—her English slipped away entirely.

Whether Xochitl ever heard of the inquiry upon which the consul based his report of all lost, is hard to say. Fifty miles is a long distance in the jungle country, and the consul went into the mine from another town by a different trail; so probably she did not.

But if she had, it would have been impossible for her to have kept the child under closer guard. Here and there between the river and the *jacal*, hoeing her corn in the clearing, little Luz—"Light," as Xochitl had renamed her—was free to run after her, like a small red fawn at its mother's heels. At mealtimes, too, she was allowed to pat the corn paste as Xochitl ground it on the *metate* into wee *tortillas* for her own small supper.

When, later, Xochitl plied a busy needle out in the cool of the wide brown eaves, she loved to watch the little thing puckering her smooth, white brows over a bit of baby sewing. But these activities were all of the clearing. On the days that Xochitl carried her gourds and garden produce to sell on the market, Luz remained indoors, mum as a small mouse, partly through love—but principally, it is to be feared, through dread of the great serpent which, as every one knows, lies in wait for small, naughty Tehuanas.

And as, on her part, Xochitl now assiduously cultivated the loneliness that had previously been forced upon her, no other soul set eyes on the child up to the moment, a year and a half later, that she followed Xochitl by stealth along the jungle paths and through the rainbow streets of the town to her stand on the market.

As every Tehuana either raises or makes something for sale or barter, the pillared market is the heart of the town's life, and on the morning that Luz made her debut a thousand crimson figures were weaving among the time-stained chrome pillars that uphold the heavy, tiled roof. Frightened and convicted of her naughtiness by the

noise and bustle, she ran and hid her face in Xochitl's skirt, and be sure that neither were lessened by the sudden appearance of a child of her age and colors.

In the course of the morning—for, now that her secret was out, Xochitl put on a confident face—fully nine hundred and ninety-nine of the thousand came over to the corner where she had her wares spread out, to see and exclaim at the child: "Such hair and eyes!" "*Mia gauipa*, the pretty *niña*!" "Where didst thou get her, Xochitl?" So, with a thousand variations, ran the questions and praise.

Fortunately for Xochitl, the necessity of doing both man and woman's work for a couple of generations, has reduced in the Tehuana the vice of her sex down to the proportions of a healthy interest; she has had neither time nor energy to waste keeping tab on her neighbors' ages and love affairs. Though she was only just turned eighteen at this time, Xochitl looked full twenty. It was generally known that she had lived for a long time alone in the jungle. So when she quietly answered: "Where should a woman get her child?" the questioners simply cast back five years in their minds to the irruption of English surveyors, who had left other souvenirs in the town besides the stakes of a projected railway.

"So—so?" the gossip ran. "Still another!"

Finally, as it all occurred in the rainy season, when, running at flood, the river cut Tehuantepec completely off from Santa Maria, its twin village, where Xochitl was born, and her mother still lived, the thing became an old tale, passed from public tongue before any of her familiars even heard of it. Withal, she carried a fearful heart under her confident airs for a long time; were it possible, would undoubtedly have withdrawn to the secrecy of their former life. But after a while she came to realize the advantages of public, over private, mothership, in that it permitted her to carry out a new ambition, and put the child under the maestro at school.

While perhaps not quite so replete with suffocating fears, the excitement attendant upon this event entitles it to rank next to the child's debut on the market. There being as yet no *Escuela Municipal* in the town, the children of the prefect, comandante, jefe-politico, and other dignitaries of the *alta social* attended the private school of Maestro Leal, a wrinkled old Spaniard. Though few in number, the exalted station of his pupils invested his office with dignity out of proportion to its fees, and it was, of course, the very height of presumption for a *peona* like Xochitl to even dream of placing her child under him. Nor did he fail to roar his resentment at her across the school on the morning that she appeared in his doorway, Luz in hand.

"Is it for peon brats to take their letters along with the children of gentle-folks? What are the times come to!"

But was there ever a lock too stiff for a golden key? His old, black eyes burned among their wrinkles at the sight of the gold piece Xochitl held out on her hand.

"So, so? But, wait! The little señorita desires learning? Enter, señora, and we shall see. If she prove apt, it shall never be said that Maestro Leal turned a poor scholar away from his door."

To give the old fellow his due, he did warm to the child, when, in no very long time, she passed up to the leadership of his smaller group—if only for the credit reflected upon his tutelage. Whether his interest would have survived the withdrawal of the gold Xochitl dropped into his withered palm once a quarter is, however, quite another story; one, moreover, that must go forever unanswered, as the neck chain that supplied it lasted out to the end.

At once the hoard, dowry, and heirloom of her family, it had come down to her from her father's mother. The Spanish doubloons, British guineas, gold coins of every nationality and time that formed it testified to the thrift of many a generation of Tehuanas before her; yet, though it was considered al-

most sacrilege in the town to part a link save to add another coin, Xochitl broke it up without a thought or pang. While reserving the larger pieces for the maestro's fees—nor is it recorded that he took exception to such various coinage—she strung the smaller into a tiny chain for Luz, keeping but only a couple to buy silk, lace, and velours for a small *fiesta* dress, the miniature of her own.

To see the two of them—the first Sabbath after the dress was made—in white skirts, stiffly starched, under broad bands of crimson velvet, scarlet *huipilitas* curiously worked with threads of silver and gold, above all the enormous Tehuana lace headdress, to see the big, brown beauty leading her charge around the "stations of the cross" in the dusk of the adobe church was to see a sight that, in atmosphere and radiant color, eminently fitted it as a subject for a stained-glass window.

And if less of a spectacle, the life at home in the clearing was equally picturesque. For it ran in tune with the soft whisper of winds in the palms and bananas; was illumined by the silken glammers of tropic sunrises and settings over the verdant jungle; spaced by velvet nights under the white fire of southern stars. Between school and church, market and clearing, their quiet days were spent, and if the life ran widely from that of the staid New England home to which discovery by the consul would have consigned the child, it at least lacked its narrow restrictions.

Under its deep breaths, full freedom, Luz thrived like a jungle flower—shot up to her inches before she was thirteen. And while she grew, Xochitl looked on; watched with fondness almost loverlike the chubby limbs lengthen into the lithe beauty of girlhood; then, while she was looking, develop, with all of the suddenness of a southern budding, into womanly roundness.

Observing the girl as they came up from the river together one evening, Xochitl realized the sudden menace of her loveliness.

If she had not already divined it, the knowledge would, in any case, have

been forced upon her by an incident that occurred within the next few days. Luz having called for Xochitl at the market, they were walking home, happily chatting in low, liquid Spanish, soft as the cooing of doves, when they chanced to meet the jefe-politico and his lieutenant of *rurales* in a narrow alley that led down from a hilly street. So narrow, indeed it was the stout jefe almost filled it, and as the *rural*—a man appointed from the City of Mexico—willfully kept place beside him, the two girls were squeezed to the wall.

"Ola! What have we here? Ripe fruit in another year for some one's picking."

Ostensibly speaking to the jefe, he smiled in Luz's eyes, then laughed outright at the scarlet colors that followed his sly pinch. Bright as they were, they paled by comparison with Xochitl's furious blush as he ran on:

"And this other? The finest bit of flesh I have seen in the town. I think I will——"

"Si, 'twill pay thee to pause and think," the jefe's dry answer floated back to them. "Before meddling with either, consult first with Schwend, the German, who bears a scar from her knife."

"A love scratch!" The *rural* laughed. "The finest flowers have always the longest thorns, but a careful hand may pick them. I will wager a month's pay that I wear both at my buttonhole! First the big one, then——"

He passed, just then, around the corner—in good time to escape having his boast tested. But the hand that had flown into Xochitl's bosom dropped, her eyes grew black with the shadow of coming trouble, as the girl asked, turning up innocent eyes: "What did he mean? Had he not pinched me, I should have liked him—he is so tall and straight—and has such pretty clothes."

"'Tis the worthless bird has always the gayest plumage," Xochitl gravely cautioned her. "What so useless, *niña*, as the *guachamaya*? And soldiers are very wicked. Think no more of him."

"I will not," Luz dutifully answered.

But thought is not so easily controlled, and certain spells of musing into which she fell that evening caused Xochitl great uneasiness, drove her from her sleepless bed late in the night to try and unravel her hot tangle of thought in the cool of the outer air.

Passing out, she paused, and stood for some time looking down on Luz in her sleep. In that climate, both blankets and bedding were—mercifully—unknown, and the girl lay on a simple *catre* of the country—a strip of canvas stretched on a sawhorse frame. It was too hot for any covering, and sliding between the chinks of the split-pole siding, the full moon caressed with faint, yellow fingers the round arm doubled under her cheek, the small, white feet, that protruded beyond the hem of her white chemise. Framed by its bright hair, her face lay, upturned, in the larger pool left by a gap between crooked poles, and the mystery of sleep added to its sweetness a quiet dignity, a touch of sternness that somehow raised in Xochitl feelings that she had not experienced since the morning the child floated out of the river into her warm bosom. Once again she felt the awe of the superior race, felt it as strongly as though she had been overlooking the slumbers of the prefect's daughter, or some other white beauty of the *alta social*; nor could she shake it off when she went outside.

There everything breathed of peace. In the tender light that flooded the clearing, the *jacal* uplifted its graceful, curved roof, a fretwork of shadow and gold, out of the pale-green corn. The broad, black flags of the bananas ran with the feathered palms, a dark arabesque across the moonlit sky. The breath of the wind in the thatch, its rattle among the palms, all were soothing, and as she crouched, thinking, in the shadow under the eaves, her thoughts ran in rhythm with the river's murmur. Small wonder that her heat cooled, that she was able to turn on her problem the clear, candid gaze of the primitive woman.

Unlike the soft women of civilization, whose perceptions are blinded by social

shams and subterfuges, tenderness of relatives and friends, Xochitl had seen love and life from the beginning in their real relations of passion and work. So, looking down the future with her clear gaze unhandicapped by roseate illusions, she saw for Luz choice of only two lots—to be a rich man's concubine, or an Indian's wife-slave—most probably, first one, and then the other.

To be sure, this was the common lot of Tehuana women; for, as already said, the shadow of a priest seldom fell across their unions. But, instead of modifying, the fact increased her vivid revulsion.

Luz's slim white youth should never be smirched by such degradation! Xochitl swore to it, standing once more beside the girl's bed. But how to avoid it? Though she tossed all night, dawn brought no light. Neither did the full day, and after hours of desperate brooding, she turned her feet that evening to the maestro's door.

Though disturbed just as he had settled down to the mingled delights of tobacco and *tequila*, the old fellow lent both mind and ear to her story.

"Thou sayest truly," he confirmed her findings. "The child of a peona stands small chance in this wicked world." Screwing up his eyes till their wrinkles were multiplied a hundredfold, he went on to deliver an opinion of the *alta social* that was greatly at variance with the exaggerated respect he accorded it on quarter days. "To put her to service would be to throw her at once in the pit. Not a house but has its heady young bloods—not to speak of their fathers! As well cast her into a den of lions." After a minute's musing, during which Xochitl's dark gaze eagerly searched his wise wrinkles, he added: "If there were but a little money forward! But, no, it would take a full thousand pesos."

The gesture with which he dismissed the idea testified to its ridiculousness, and his ragged, black brows shot up as Xochitl demanded: "*Si?*" If one had a thousand pesos?"

"A great sum, señora." His tone rebuked her presumption; but, dignity

thus protected, he condescended a tittle to her curiosity. "For that amount she could be placed with the sisters in the Convent of Oaxaca, and attend the daily sessions of the school for teachers. With the fine preparation she has obtained through me"—coughing, he straightened in his chair—"she would canter through her classes, and come out in three years, a maestra, full-fledged. From such a position she could not but make a good marriage—a merchant, at least—perhaps a rich gringo—even into the *alta social*. But this is foolish talk! Where are the thousand pesos?"

"*Si,*" she echoed, leaving him. "Where are they?"

She was not long, however, in puzzling out their whereabouts. Though the longer way, her feet turned of themselves to the path along the river, and as she followed its windings, always within sound of its murmured sympathy, she haled forth, and took a good look at a plan that had hung like a secret horror all day in the back of her mind.

It was now almost twelve years since her knife had cooled the first ardor of Schwend, the German; but throughout all that time she had been perfectly aware that she still sufficiently filled his blue eye. Though she never crossed the river nowadays to Santa Maria, where he had his store, he often came to market, nor ever passed her stall without calling out: "Thy place still waits in my house." And always—believing his rough humor—she could feel his eyes, plucking, plucking like small, blue hands, at her vestures.

While bringing her forward to the full splendors of conserved womanhood—for she was just turned twenty-five—these long years had carried him over the border into middle age, adding double chin, thick neck, apoplectic eye pouches to naturally homely features. Yet, with these clearly imprinted upon her mind, she sat down to consider surrender on the very spot the river had delivered itself of the child.

She was not long, either, making up her mind. As aforesaid, life's meanings had never been hidden from her by

rosy veils. In her world, at least, nature balanced every joy with a sorrow, cast early decay against early loving, chastened with sickness and death the furious love of mothers, and set against youth and beauty the twin curse of work and years. They had to be paid for, those years of love and quiet, and this was the price. Very quietly, with great simplicity, she went about to pay it.

If somewhat of a miser, giving only that she may receive, Nature is absolutely just in dealing out her compensations, and while stealing the trader's youth she had returned him prosperity in such measure that his adobe house and stores now filled one side of the Santa Maria plaza. Also, he had his private office behind the store, with a side door opening out on the street, and, having just come in from the noon siesta, he cut off a wide yawn at the sight of Xochitl, patiently waiting without. Perhaps he took her for the continuation of a dream, for he continued to stare at the picture she made in the shadowy chromes of the doorway against a background of sun-struck street, till she stepped inside and spoke:

"Does my place still wait?"

The purple suffusion that flowed up to the roots of his stiff, blond hair would have been answer enough without his short nod. Gulping, he was about to speak, but stopped and stared as she spoke again:

"I will take it—for a thousand pesos."

"*A thousand pesos!*" he burst out, recovering his voice. "Art thou mad? For half the price I can buy me a hundred women!"

With suddenness that threw skirts and mantilla about her in a crimson cloud, she turned, and was halfway down the street before he could get to the door and call her back; and, whether by design, or through real feeling, she returned slowly, at that.

Seated once more at his desk, he asked: "What wouldst thou do with it, this thousand pesos?"

She told, and while it was pouring out of her, the tale of love and sacrifice, he regarded her, first shrewdly, then with increasing interest. Once or twice he even clucked softly, and when she concluded, he asked:

"If I gave it—thou wouldst return?"

"I would return."

Without another word, he opened his safe.

Sitting at his desk, about the same hour, two weeks later, the trader looked up as a shadow fell through the doorway, and saw Xochitl.

"Si, she is safely bestowed," she answered his question. A sudden irradiance of pride bursting all over her face, she added: "And the maestro of the great school predicts fine things for her."

"Good!" he commented. "There will always be news to cheer thee at thy visits."

But he stiffened in sudden indignation as she quietly answered:

"I am never to see her again."

"What?" he shouted. "Did she agree? After——"

"No, no, señor!" she interrupted. "She cried most bitterly, would not be consoled, save by the promise of an early visit. But what am I that I should hang like a drag on her successes? The sisters agreed that 'twas better so, and she is young—will soon forget."

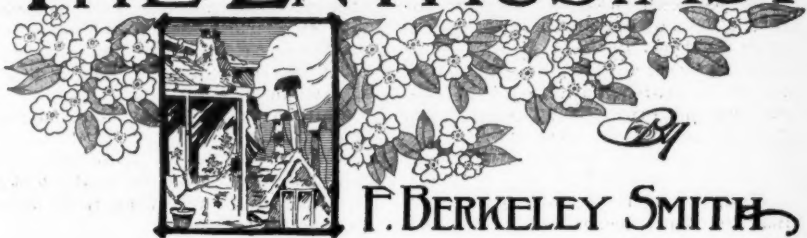
"And now?"

"I am here." She spread out her hands before him.

"Then, go!" He shouted it harshly. "Am I at the pass that I must needs buy me a——"

But he stopped, as, regarding him steadily, she crossed the room, and passed out into the patio through the inner door. Rising, a minute later, he tiptoed to the door, and at the sight of her, upon her knees, grinding paste for the supper *tortillas*, his shaggy brows rose in quizzical astonishment. Returning to his desk, he remained some minutes, deep in thought. Then, picking up his pen, he set to work, whistling softly as he wrote.

THE ENTHUSIAST



F. BERKELEY SMITH



HAVE seen Briston seasick, but never in love. So, when he climbed the spiral stairs and rapped at the modest brown door of my garret studio, beneath the roofs in the Rue des Deux Amies, was let in, refused a cigarette I tossed him from my easel, and announced he had invited a certain Brazilian lady he had met on the steamer to luncheon at the Café de la Paix, Marie, my model, who was buttoning her boots, and who understands a little English, burst into a fit of giggles.

Describe Briston? Let me tell you it is not easy, since the description must be net and precise—like Briston.

He is a tall, thin young Englishman, with about as much flesh on his ribs as a fox terrier; a fellow with a set purpose in his Parisian life, in whose tenacious pursuit the so-called weaker instincts common to man have been stifled.

Briston is a machine, as finely adjusted as the high-power focus on his best binocular microscope, through which his gray, beadlike eyes, set close to the bridge of his aristocratic nose, have been for five years steadily engaged in research.

Briston is a fact—as dry as the cross section of the spinal column of a mole, sliced on a parafined cork to a thousandth of an inch, and hermetically sealed from vulgar contact with the outer world in a drop of refined balsam.

The Café de la Paix!

I looked at Briston in amazement, for we were both as poor as rats—almost as poor as Marie.

It was evident from the gloomy hesitancy in his thin voice that he already regretted his extravagant invitation—half through timidity, partly because he feared the expense.

Again Marie understood.

Removing two hairpins from her saucy mouth, she looked up at the victim naïvely, an expression that changed to a good-hearted smile of pity.

"Listen, my little one," she said softly.

Briston stiffened at the familiarity.

"*Mais, voyons, mon petit!*" continued Marie. "The Café de la Paix! You are crazy—you will go hungry, my poor friend, for the rest of the month. It is true what I tell you. Ah, no! The grand restaurants are not for you. They are for the imbeciles with plenty of louis, the princes, the 'big vegetables'; those rich old 'pears' as bald as a boiled egg."

She paused, and laid aside her button-hook thoughtfully on the worn divan.

"Ah, *zut alors!*" she exclaimed. "It is not as difficult as all that. If your *Brazilienne* is a good comrade, she will be content with—*enfin!*—a little restaurant like the rest of us. *Quoi?* But if she plays the *princesse*, beware, my old one; you will not have a sou left."

She let down her soft, dark hair about her firm, young shoulders, and started a braid.

"Listen!" she again resumed. "There

is the Mouton d'Or. One eats well there for three francs. It is not too dear that, *hein?*"

Briston seemed relieved, though he reddened with embarrassment under her frankness.

"Besides," she added, "I know the patron—you will not be robbed. I will tell him you are coming with your madame."

"Mademoiselle," corrected Briston, who was always accurate.

"*Madame*," insisted Marie.

"But she is not married," returned Briston, with conviction.

"It is not polite," explained Marie. "A lady should always be called 'madame' whether she is married or not."

She rose and turned to the dusty mirror over the mantel, whose dull glass served to guide her small hands in busily coiling and patting into place her three braids.

How neatly she does it, this simple coiffure of hers, that begins at the nape of her shapely little neck, touches in passing the tips of her small, pink ears, and ends in two twists and a coil on the top of her pretty head. Another hairpin sank in place, and she went to the kitchen, where the glass was clearer, to dress.

With Marie's final word of advice, my studio beneath the roofs had become silent.

At length Briston stirred himself uneasily, and, with an anxious look and some hesitation, finally blurted out:

"I wish you'd come along, old chap—er—you see, I don't know her very well, and with my bad French——"

"*Dieu!* He is funny!" I overheard Marie sigh from the kitchen.

"Join you two at luncheon—not much! Delighted to meet your Brazilian at any other time," I declared; "but I am not as indiscreet as all that."

He looked at me gravely, like a young professor weighing a pupil's answer.

"No, no!" I protested. "Go and have your little luncheon, you two, and be glad if the sun shines and you have enough in your pocket for an excellent dish and a kind bottle of wine. It will do you good—that 'rinses the eyes,' as

the French say. I've no doubt madame is charming; a Brazilian, eh? And beautiful?"

"Um—er—yes," he declared thoughtfully, twirling his pale, transparent fingers in a sunbeam. "I dare say you would call her beautiful. 'Beautiful' is not exactly the word. She possesses, however, a certain personal attraction; fairly tall, dark hair, and all that sort of thing."

"Speaks English?"

"Brokenly, with a limited vocabulary," confessed Briston.

"Pretty teeth? Gracious?"

"Er—svelte, with excellent teeth."

"Briston, you're a coward!" I laughed. "Forgive me, but you are. How in the devil did this fatal invitation occur?"

"Well, you see, old chap, I was quite ill on board. We *did* have a wretched voyage all the way over, rather! And she *was* kind to me; loaned me books, and salts, and all that sort of thing. Do you see?"

"Oh, la, la!" sighed Marie.

"Say you'll come!" he insisted.

"I'll come," I promised, no longer able to resist the prospect of meeting a beautiful Brazilian.

"Good!" he exclaimed, with nervous satisfaction, rubbing together the palms of his thin hands.

"What day?" I asked.

"Thursday, at half after twelve. We are to meet on the café terrace."

"Ah, then you will not bring madame with you?"

Briston reddened slightly. "She would not give me her address," he confessed. "She rather insisted on our meeting on the terrace."

I glanced up at Marie, who was now buttoning her gloves beside my easel, and saw a faint smile lurking around the corners of her mouth that spelled "adventuress." Briston saw it, too, but he did not understand.

Marie put out her hand to him, and he rose and shook it formally.

"Good luck, *mon prince!*" she said, picking up her portemonnaie.

"Until to-morrow, my child," said I, as she laid a friendly hand in passing

on my shoulder, and a moment later closed my studio door behind her.

As I listened to the patter of her trim feet die away down the stairs, I saw a gleam of intense relief enter Briston's eyes.

The whole world, sooner or later, passes before the Café de la Paix. In this slow current of drifting humanity, made up of the flotsam and jetsam of the universe, there is rarely a type that is not familiar.

Past the three rows of tables skirting the sidewalk of the boulevard, the innocent touch elbows with the vicious; the long with the short. Beauty is rare; but the Beast is omnipresent from morning until the following gray dawn. It is a human current of idleness that moves in a jargon of all languages. Rich and poor. Savage and savant. Spendthrift and miser. The woman with her transient prey. Rarely does one glance twice at any of them. They pass daily and nightly, as they passed before the *apéritifs* of our great uncles, and will continue to pass before future generations of *boulevardiers*.

I was explaining this to Briston as I looked at my watch, with the firm conviction that madame, being a Brazilian, would be naturally three-quarters of an hour late, if she appeared at all. It was not the first time I had waited, with enthusiasm, on a café terrace for a Latin lady.

Amazing! At precisely twelve-thirty to the minute, Briston rose out of his chair and removed his hat. At the same instant almost the entire terrace turned to gaze at a woman approaching our table. Instinctively I drew a quick breath. I was even a little late in rising, and uncovering my head, so fascinated and absorbed was I in the sheer beauty of the woman.

If she was an adventuress, she was of the type that could have turned a crowned head. Never had I seen so subtly modeled, so exquisite a figure. There was that classic fullness about it which indicates a woman in her prime, and not past it. She moved with such ease that it was catlike, and yet with a

certain gracious dignity, gowned as she was, this sunny spring morning, in a clinging frock of gray pongee silk, with white polka dots, a parasol to match, a becoming Gainsborough hat, with white wings, and a pendant ruby at her throat. She herself was like a jewel.

The brilliancy of her dark, Oriental eyes, with their curved lashes, the rich sheen of her intensely black hair, the pure oval of her face, her skin like dusky ivory flushed with health, and now her frank smile as she drew near us, disclosing her faultless teeth—ah, these were only details; but I saw them at a glance.

"My deah boy," she laughed, as she held out her gloved hand to the somewhat flustered Briston; "you see I not make zee late like everybod', isn't it?"

"Mademoiselle—er—" Then checking himself: "Er—Madame da Varra-guillo," stammered Briston, by way of introduction.

"I feel, madame, more like an indiscreet intruder than a guest," I declared, with my best bow.

"Non! Non!" she exclaimed. "What for zee excuse? It is stupide, *hein*? Always zoez stupide tête-à-têtes; zoez stupide lovaires, isn't it?" Laughing, she took her seat between us, and started to remove her gloves. "We shall be zee good comrades, is it not? All three?"

She turned to me roguishly, half closing her brilliant eyes—the eyes of an odalisque.

"He is so quiet, is it not? Zat good Monsieur Briston?" she said mischievously, and she patted his thin hand in friendly apology.

"Of course—it is far bettaire—zee comrades," she added, with a weary little sigh. This time she laid a half-gloved hand firmly over my own—a shapely hand ringed to the knuckles with emeralds. It was characteristic of her Brazilian blood. There was a touch of the savage there in her love of jewels that I liked.

Ah! Never had I seen such eyes! They smiled at you even when, for an instant, her face was in repose. Eyes no less seductive and captivating than

her voice. The simplest thing she said was rendered with a certain vibrant, tragic intensity; wide-eyed often, her jeweled hands now clenched, now darting with the rapidity of two dragon flies as she gesticulated her words. Again, her voice would rise to a staccato—a volley of words then, each syllable crisp and distinct as it was freed from its barrier of pearls.

Strange to say, despite her vibrant intensity of speech and gesture, no one at the next table would have been disturbed, for she spoke directly to you, and no farther. Yet, again, her voice would sink to one of dreamy gentleness. She was seductive beyond words.

As Briston motioned to the waiter, she raised her hands in protest.

"Non!" she said, with firmness.

"A little vermouth, then?" ventured Briston, who had suggested a glass of porto.

"Non! Non! Non!" came in quick staccato, her rich voice rising in intensity. "Not zat!" And she measured the infinitesimal quantity by the pink, manicured nail of her little finger.

"Mon Dieu! Zoze silly *apéritifs*—zey are what you say—horrible for zee intestines—is it not? Nevaire for me, even zee wine." Her voice sank to one of rich, dreamy cadence. "It makes me—what you say in English, 'quite crazy.'"

I believed her. Was she not wine herself of the rarest vintage? She reminded me of sparkling Burgundy.

The table we had chosen for luncheon was tucked away in a quiet corner of the restaurant. As we entered, the smug-faced *maitre d'hôtel* chirped authoritatively to his assistants, placed a footstool himself beneath her feet—a delicate attention, which left him florid and short of breath, for he was overfat—and waited with pad and pencil for the order, while Briston nervously cleared his throat and scanned the menu.

Marie's advice as to a modest restaurant now came back to us, I believe, simultaneously. Briston's agony was of short duration, for his guest took the menu from him.

"We shall begin with zee *hors d'œuvres*," she said quietly. "Ah, zey are so good here. And zen zey give you enough. Zoze many leetle fishes in oil and zee rest—I adore zem."

"And then?" ventured Briston.

"Ah, zen, my children, you shall have zee good chop and zee *pommes de terres*."

She turned to the one in the black apron, with the ever-ready corkscrew.

"Une bouteille de vin ordinaire," she commanded, "*et un demi d'Évian—c'est tout.*"

"Bien, madame," and the cellar man went his way.

"But," declared Briston, "you will starve."

"No, my deah boy," she laughed softly. "It is quite enough—all zat."

From that moment I no longer doubted her good heart or her quick understanding. Our modest luncheon went merrily under the spell of her fascination; and there we sat like obedient children; I supremely happy; Briston—ah, well, Briston is a stone. And we laughed into each other's eyes—she and I—while she told us of the grandeur of Rio de Janeiro, and of its lavish life, with all the vibrant intensity of her nature.

"And when you shall see zoze mountains and zee port, zen you shall cry zey are so beautiful," she went on; "and zen I go to England. Is it not fearful—a whole winter in London—like what you say 'an exile'? It was horrible!" she exclaimed, with a shiver. "Zee fogs—zee fogs in zat big hotel—in my boudoir—in my bedroom—in my clothes. Oh, la, la! Zen I say to Señor Varraguillo zat if I stay longer I die, and he vary jealous man, my husband."

Briston started.

"I must confess—that is, I mean to say I did not know you were married," he ventured timidly.

"Yes, my deah boy—no, it is true I not tell you—now I have zee divorce since long time—nevaire I go no more to London to freeze."

"Divorce is a good thing," I declared, with the indiscretion of youth, "when two people cannot get along."

"Of course," she returned, in a low voice.

"Your ex-husband is in Paris?" I asked, remembering her alluding to his jealous character.

"No, my deah boy—he is in—zee colonies. He make what you call zee—zee bad *affaires*. It is a pity to marry so young—I marry at fifteen."

We reached the end of our luncheon only too quick; Briston proposing a drive in the Bois, and I tea at Armononville later.

"*Non!*" she protested quickly. "*Non truly.*" There was a mischievous light in her eyes. "Now, zen, you shall come wiz me."

"Where?" I exclaimed, my mind suddenly alive; my imagination picturing the luxurious interior of her private hotel, cigarettes in her boudoir, with possibly a tame tiger dozing at her feet. I had read of such boudoirs.

Again her brilliant eyes half closed mischievously.

"You shall see," she said simply. "You shall now come wiz me."

I no longer was conscious of the Café de la Paix. Follow her! I would have followed her to the ends of the earth. It seemed to me I was living in a dream, intoxicated under the spell of the most radiantly beautiful woman it had ever been my good fortune to meet. Evidently I did not disguise the fact, for she paid but little attention to Briston, and I felt—aye, knew we were already good friends. Such is the presumption of youth. And so we rose from our cozy table, and followed her as children follow a trusty nurse, out into the warm sunlight, those remaining on the terrace turning for a last look.

The prowling *fiacres* followed us, too; but she stubbornly refused them. Had I been forty, I should have scented danger; but at twenty, one thinks of nothing. Besides, was she not Briston's friend? Had she not been kind to him at sea, and loaned him "books, and salts, and all that sort of thing." Adventure? Nonsense! She was adorable.

And so we turned into the Place de l'Opéra, and thence down the Rue de la Paix, where there are more jewels for

sale than along any other mercantile lane I know. It is a street up and down which doddering old beaux are led to slaughter—a pearl necklace for a whispered word—a gown for a smile—sables to appease the petulant.

I noticed Briston was getting nervous. He was never meant for this world. He still had, I know, a louis in his pocket, and I had eight francs, so what cared we?

"It is farzaire on," she remarked, and farther on it was.

Before a window she stopped abruptly.

"Are zey not pretty?" she declared naïvely. "Is it not lovely to see such pretty lingerie?"

Indeed it was—indeed they were. Where else in the world are they so pretty? What luxury in lace and ribbons! What a billowy windowful of exquisite confections! What spider webbery for the most fastidious spun to order!

We left the wax ladies about to retire, and moved lazily down the street of fashion in the balmy spring sunshine, halting again and again before more lingerie; before glittering fortunes in diamond sprays and coronets of brilliants that are supposed to give to the rich an air of royalty.

Briston regarded them dryly, with an assumed grin of forced interest. One of those peaked grins of interest that an old maid might be expected to assume before the window of a gunsmith.

She was so dear and amusing as she explained everything to me, drawing my attention here and there by a friendly pressure of the arm, touching upon some latest Parisian scandal connected with a string of pearls, or some colossal bill for frou-frous contracted by a certain diva who had once been the daughter of a concierge, and whose extravagant account had been finally settled by a duke.

"Is it not what you say amazing? Zoze women—zey are nevaire content—zey love nobod'—and zey fool zee whole world. Of course, my deah boy, zey are not what you call zee good comrades, *hein?* You must nevaire believe zem—

zoze stupide leetle women—nevaire," she counseled us.

And so we crossed at the Place Vendôme, and so on all the way back on the other side of the gay street of jewels and frou-frous.

Briston had now begun to glance nervously at his watch, for, as he explained, he was due at a lecture at the Sorbonne at four.

I had grown strangely silent, despite the caress of her eyes and her radiant good humor. I had just begun to realize that we were nearing the end of our promenade, that in a little while she would be gone, that I might never, never see her again, for she, too, had hinted at an engagement. No, I reasoned vaguely, she could not be as cruel as that, she with her big, warm heart—perhaps she would invite me to tea. But where? She had even refused Briston her address. I began to take a violent dislike to Briston, and yet I owed him much.

"I—er—I must be going, I fear," he faltered weakly as we regained the corner of the boulevard, "or I shall be late for my lecture."

I turned to her pleadingly.

"Let me take you home," I blurted out.

She smiled, was silent for a moment, and then, with a look of infinite tenderness, shook her head slowly in the negative.

"No, my deah boy, zat is *quite* impossible. You must not make zee sad—has it not been jolly, our leetle fête? It has been bettaire zan zee Bois, *hein*?" She laughed, and added, bending close to my ear: "And our leetle promenade, so amusing to zee eyes, has cost notzing. Everybod' must make zee leetle economies in life, is it not?"

She bade Briston good-by with a gracious word of thanks as he took his leave abruptly, and rushed for his omnibus. It was a relief to me when he was gone.

We were alone. That is, as much as any two people can be alone on the corner of the crowded boulevard. The passing tide of sordid humanity did not interest me now. They were in the way.

"Please," I again pleaded, but she again shook her head.

"I may not see you again, then?"

"Yes, my deah boy, when it is possible." She hesitated; then, with a quick intake of her breath. "Yes, you shall see me again—when it is possible."

I tore away the back of an envelope, and started to write Ten Rue des Deux Amies, but my hand trembled so I had to begin again.

To my joy, she took it, crumpled it into a tiny wad, and, opening her gold purse, dropped it within, and snapped shut the jeweled clasp.

I was content.

"Rue des Deux Amies," she smiled, "zen we are to be good friends." She gave me her hand. "Au revoir!" she said, still smiling. "Non, you shall not call a *fiacre*; my carriage is waiting beyond zee corner. Au revoir," she repeated. "Do not follow me—I not wish it."

She was gone in the throng. I stood for a moment, unable to do more than gaze at the vanishing tips of the white wings in her hat; then they, too, disappeared in the crowd. Disconsolately I turned back down the Rue de la Paix; but the memory of the windows was too poignant, and I moved with no definite direction in my mind down a side street. Something was gripping painfully at my heart; a strange numbness had seized me. It was long past midnight when I climbed my studio stairs. I had been walking continually, and had not dined, neither could I remember the route I had taken to regain my garret beneath the roofs.

A week passed. A whole, dreary week of nervous, anxious waiting, during which I bolted the brown door at the top of the stairs against every one save Marie, who came to pose.

During the dreary week, I made a full confession to Marie apropos of the luncheon. All that good little model of mine could do was to sympathize with me from the bottom of her Montmartoise heart. Marie also gave me advice. She told me I should be philo-

sophical, and be content with the pleasant souvenir of the day.

"*C'est la vie! Quoi?*" (Such is life.)

Good little soul, she did her best to cheer me up, trying to convince me that all women were alike, that in my enthusiasm I took them too seriously, that it did not pay to be impressionable, and that, after all, love was a question of illusion.

I was glad often when her day's posing was done, and she had gone. Then I could be alone with my memory and the twilight, and dream as I watched the swallows screaming in a game of tag over the chimney pipes. I no longer went to the little restaurant around the corner of the Rue des Deux Amies to dine. I laid in a few provisions. I had a certain dread of leaving my abode beneath the roofs lest a word from her might come in my absence; lest she herself might rap at my door, as a surprise, and find me out. Such things have happened to those who have lost all hope.

As for Briston, I saw nothing of him; but this was not strange, as he came rarely to the studio. He had gone his precise and methodical way, glad, no doubt, that the luncheon was over. Frankly I never wanted to see him again. Thus I suffered, and waited a whole month.

I knew that step on the stairs; the slow stamp of the telegraph boy.

I rushed to open the door.

"For me?" I called down to him.

"*Oui, monsieur.*"

"Hurry!" I commanded.

I leaped down and met him halfway, snatched the blue *pneumatique* from him, and gave him a franc. I might as thoughtlessly have given him a gold louis. Then, with a hand that trembled more than when I had written my own address that memorable afternoon, I tore open the perforated, glued edges of the *petit bleu*, and read:

DEAR FRIEND: You see I now keep my promise. Then now you must come—to-morrow at five, and we make the little talk and the tea, is it not?

PAZITA.

32, Rue Gaston Lacroix.

"Pazita!" What a pretty name! It was just the name for her. I would call her "Paz," and she would laugh and not mind. Yes—Paz was even prettier. The world seemed mine now.

I opened the windows wide to let in the sunshine from the kind old world, tingling with joy as I read and reread the note which her own hand had written, copying the address lest anything might happen to the original. To-morrow seemed an eternity away. A whole day and a night, and then until five. And yet I had waited a month—a whole month, hour by hour.

I could go out now for a long walk, and so I walked and walked, keeping mostly to the boulevards, teeming with happy people, bathed in the warmth of this delicious spring morning. Everywhere crept the merry sunshine, even in the most humble corners; all things glittered in facets of light. The lazy air was exhilarating, and as soft as a caress. Most of that night I lay wide awake, planning a dinner of my own.

I had amassed my entire fortune on the table by my bed—nearly five louis! With one hundred francs one can be *en fête*! She would dine with me, of course—after tea. This time it would not be a Briston luncheon, it would be a real dinner. Even if I had to lie to her and tell her one of my uncles had died, that art to me had now become an idle amusement, not a necessity. For one evening I should live. It is less hard to have nothing when one has been happy. The morrow would take care of itself.

At five the next afternoon my heart beat fast as I entered a modern apartment house in the Rue Gaston Lacroix.

"Do not trouble yourself, madame," I said to the concierge, as she indicated the elevator and the right button for the fifth floor. "I will walk up."

And I gained the fifth floor quicker than the shaky little elevator could have made it. Then, panting for breath, I touched the electric button beside an imitation oak door with a red doormat, and waited.

Presently I heard the soft tread of slipped feet and the faint swish of

silk. Something began to sing in my ears. The door opened wide, and I looked up into her eyes.

"My deah boy!" she exclaimed, clasping both my hands in her own.

Had she been beautiful before, she was at that moment positively radiant in her soft silk peignoir, all the glorious richness of her dark hair revealed.

"You see," she laughed, "I welcome you wizout zee ceremone, isn't it? My maid I send out."

"I am so glad," I exclaimed. "You—you don't know how happy I am—how long it has seemed. You were dear to have asked me."

She still held my hands firmly, like a good comrade.

"Now zen you believe I keep my word—zat is not like everybod', *hein?*"

I felt an irrepressible impulse to take her in my arms, but she understood me like a flash, and held me with one jeweled hand, so to speak, at arm's length.

"Come—now zen you shall see my château—my château!"

She laughed heartily, leading me along the narrow corridor and into a cozy salon, and through it into her boudoir, a pretty little boudoir, hung in old-rose silk, with a duchesse table covered with gold-topped bottles, and here in a chair of old-rose brocade, drawn close to her lounge, she placed me.

"And zat good Monsieur Briston, how is he?" she began. "Zat quiet fellow? Dear me, he was so sick on zee steamer. Are zey not fearful, zoze voy-ages?"

"I have not seen him," I confessed, "since our luncheon. He cares for nothing but his work, you know," I added, with a beating heart.

"Of course," she returned, sinking among the lace cushions of the lounge. "Well, zat is good. Zere are so many zat do notzing; so many zat think of notzing but gambling, and zoze stupide leete women."

"You can make me very happy," I returned impulsively. "I want you to dine with me to-night. You will, won't you? I—I have waited so long."

"Non, my deah boy," she laughed softly, sinking her head back among the cushions. "Zat is not possible."

Then, seeing my look of utter disappointment, she leaned toward me, so close that I felt the maddening warmth of her breath.

"Come," she said cheerfully. "Now, zen, I have a bettaire idea; it is zat you dine wiz us—just as you are—*en famille*."

"With us? I do—not understand," I stammered.

"Ah, I not tell you—yes; it is quite true," she laughed.

"Raoul!" she called.

As the resonant voice of a man in answer came through the half-closed portière, I half started from my chair.

A rapid sentence in Spanish from her lips was answered in fluent French.

"Pray present my excuses to Monsieur Briston's friend," reached my ears, "and say I shall be dressed in a moment."

I was on my feet now, gazing at the half-closed portière in astonishment—embarrassed—overwhelmed.

The next instant the portière was flung open, and there entered a military-looking young fellow with a swarthy skin.

"My husband, Señor Pazita," she said graciously.

Smiling, he strode toward me, and put forth his hand in a hearty welcome. I grasped it.

We dined.

Marie came the next morning. She read me like a book. I must have seemed very much changed.

"*Eh bien, mon petit*, you have seen your *Brasilienne*," she declared.

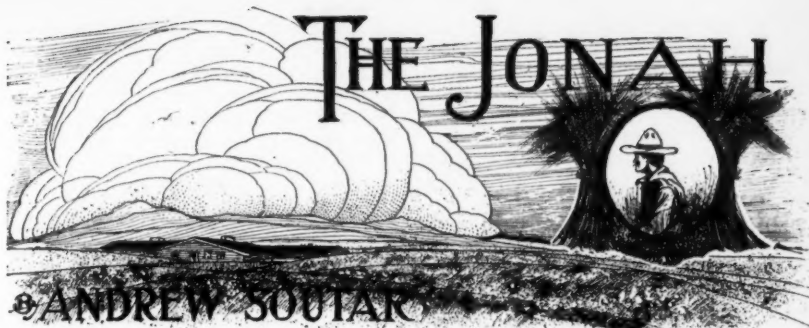
"And her husband," I returned.

"Ah, zat alors!" exclaimed Marie.

"The Mouton d'Or," I ventured. "Let us dine there to-night—you and I."

"Willingly, *mon petit*. As I told Monsieur Briston, one eats well there for three francs." And Marie went singing into the kitchen.

C'est la vie!



BY ANDREW SOUTAR

DURING the summer, Calgary had seen the coming and going of so many "birds of passage" that the sudden appearance of Mr. John Napier Napper occasioned no more surprise or comment than was expressed in a shrug of the shoulders or a pronounced sniff. The Canadian, especially that one who has had to contest every rung of the ladder of success, has a profound and ineradicable contempt for even the symbol of failure, and Napier Napper possessed nothing in the way of outward appearances that could possibly commend itself to the humblest of tastes. There was strength in his big, easy-swinging limbs; right up to the border of his celluloid collar there was evidence of the carefully trained athlete—the kind of human machine that farmers in the heart of the great Wheat Belt sighed for in vain.

But the face was hopelessly weak for a country where the natural prejudice is in favor of a strongly set jaw and an expression in the eyes that can be interpreted: "Give me food and plenty, and I'll labor like a horse." His hair was fair, and smoothed back from the high, white forehead in a manner almost suggestive of effeminacy. The eyes were blue, like those of a German doll, and carried that pathetic look expressive of resignation to the decrees of Fate—a look that makes strong-charactered men irritable. Also, he had a habit of allowing the long, lean fingers of his left

hand to play with the stud of his collar, as though that were the only occupation he could think of.

After tumbling out of the emigrant train, he sauntered up to the station master, and, with the faintest suspicion of drawl in his voice, inquired his way to "some ranch or other," where they were in need of hands.

The station master exchanged winks with the booking clerk, and then inquired of Mr. Napper if he were in search of a convalescent home or a long-lost relative on whom to sponge.

"Oh, no; merely civility," said Mr. Napper, without the slightest trace of anger in his voice. Then he added politely: "I merely asked a simple question of you, and your answer was impertinent. If I were not tired after being jostled about like a pea in a drum"—he indicated the railway line—"I should take you by the neck and punch your head."

Instead of displaying temper, the station master held out his hand.

"I beg your pardon," he said, with sincerity, "I misjudged you."

"So does everybody," Napper hinted.

"From the old country?"

"Yes."

"Broke?"

"No, not exactly; but badly bent. I want work."

"What can you do?"

"Anything, in my own opinion; nothing, apparently, in the opinion of others. I'm an 'ex-er.'"

"An 'ex' what?"

"An 'ex' everything, starting with the banking business, and taking categorically, or in turn, whichever comes within the scope of your comprehension, ship's fireman, ship's steward, tramway-car conductor, and parcel carrier. I am, in fact, what is commonly termed a 'Jonah.'"

All this while he had been sitting in a careless attitude on the ledge of the booking-office window. His luggage, contained in a knapsack, lay on the platform at his feet.

Something in the feigned indifference of Mr. Napper appealed to the heart of the station master.

"You're a young man," he said, in a reproving voice, "and it doesn't seem right in a big fellow like you to be wandering about with no particular object in view. When did you feed last?"

"At precisely six o'clock this morning," he replied; "it is now two p. m.; according to the station clock."

"That clock's stopped—been stopped four days. Come inside, and I'll see if the wife can find you something cold."

"Thanks; I'm not a tramp."

The station master half turned, impatiently twisting his lips.

"I mean," said Mr. Napper courteously, "that I prefer to work for my food—it makes it all the more enjoyable."

The station master frowned. "What work can I give you?" he growled, but the harshness went out of his eyes when Mr. Napper pointed to the broken clock.

"I'll mend it in a jiffy," he said. And he did mend it, although he had no tools other than a jackknife and his fingers.

He consumed the leg and wing of a cold chicken with the relish of a man who feels himself requited for work done. The station master watched him with an interest that was rapidly developing into fascination. He was no student of psychology, but physiognomy conveys its meaning in a neutral way even to the most elemental of minds. Mr. Napper had a distinctly intellectual head; only his eyes and mouth betrayed an uncertainty of mind and character—the character of a man who would make a fool of himself for another and

less sincere, and be the first to resent the imputation of folly.

"People in England?" asked the station master.

"No," he answered, pausing in the meal to finger the collar stud. "I have no people."

"Sorry." The station master was silent for a moment, then: "It's a mighty big place is Canada; plenty of room for a likely fellow. Superintendent of the line will be along by the next train. If it's any good to you, I'll speak to him."

"Thanks; it isn't. I want to get out into the open—out among the wheat and that sort of thing; out where a fellow can breathe without making a fool of himself."

The station master's brow puckered in thought.

"We get so many back-to-the-soilers out here," he said at last, "that the ranchers are none too keen on the goods; they're mostly back-to-the-bed after a week's graft. Now, there was a rancher through here yesterday—Mr. William Steere; has about fifty square miles back of the ridge yonder. He may find you a job."

A fork clattered on the floor.

"Steere! Did you say Steere?" Mr. Napier Napper's eyes had suddenly awakened from their customary apathetic gaze on things in general.

"Know him?" The station master arched his own eyebrows as he asked the question.

"No," said Mr. Napper, with great deliberation.

"Has a daughter—handsome daughter, worth half a dozen hands to him. He had a son, but he grew too good for the Wheat Belt, and went to the old country to spend some of William's money."

"Name of the ranch?" Napper asked.

"Hope Ranch," said the station master; "three hours' walk after you leave the town on the south. If you like to try your luck, mention—mention that you fixed up the clock. Old man Steere threatened yesterday to put a handful of quail shot through it because he said he couldn't bear anything that was idle."

He stopped short. As he uttered the last few words his glance met that of Mr. Napper, and the quiet smile of the young man embarrassed him.

"No offense," he laughed, rising from the table. "I'll call and present my card to Mr.—Mr. Steere and his handsome daughter."

It was evening when he came within view of Hope Ranch, a pile of buildings set in the very heart of a wheat area. The soft, mellow light of the half disk, as it sat on the edge of the world, lay caressingly on the ripening grain. A breeze that had sprung up from the southwest brought the wholesome aroma of the mold to his very lungs; and, as for a moment he stood on the ridge surveying all that lay before him, a new pathway in life seemed to suggest itself to the mind of Mr. Napier Napper.

"I think," he muttered, "that if, for once, my luck is in, I could stay here and forget England—if England would kindly oblige by forgetting me. But Steere! Steere! I don't like the sound of that name; it's like picking up the deuce of spades when you had expected to find the ace of hearts."

He found the track, and swung along toward the house in the distance. He had not proceeded more than a couple of hundred yards when he heard the heavy pad of a horse's hoofs on the soft, yielding earth behind him. He had barely time to spring out of the way before horse and rider were upon him, and he whistled softly as the rider drew up with a jerk and a half-suppressed cry of annoyance on her lips.

He had seen handsomer women, but none so perfectly symmetrical in figure. She was riding astride, and there was a music, new to his ears, in the creaking of her leathers and the swishing of her short, coarsely spun skirt; a wealth of deep-black hair was tied in a careless bundle at the nape of her neck, and she wore no hat. Her cheeks were flushed, as though she had ridden far and hard, and there was a petulance in the compression of her lips. Instinctively his hand went to his hat, and he bowed.

"Sorry if I startled you," she said, and her voice was good to listen to.

"I am never startled," he replied.

For a second—no more—she allowed her big eyes to wander over him, and—perhaps it was only fancy on his part—a soft expression came into them.

"Looking for work?"

"No," he answered whimsically, "happiness."

"Hope you may find it," she laughed, urging forward the horse.

She had ridden no more than two hundred yards, right to the opening in a small copse that lay between him and the house, when once again he saw her pull the horse back on its haunches. At the same moment a burly, dissolute man of the farm-laborer class stepped out of the shadows and grasped the bridle. Mr. Napier Napper heard her faint cry of dismay, saw her raise her riding whip and bring it down on the man's head, heard his loud-voiced curse—and then darted forward.

"Well, and who the devil are you, anyway?"

The man had started back as Mr. Napper approached, but there was no trace of fear in his eyes, and his hand still gripped the bridle of Miss Steere's horse.

"Who am I?" The blue eyes opened wide in genuine innocence. "Hanged if I know. But what right have you to molest this lady?"

She stirred in the saddle. "He's a dismissed farm hand," she said, "and this—this—is his revenge."

Mr. Napper turned from her and looked the man straight in the eyes.

"Let go the bridle!" he commanded.

For answer, the man slipped off his coat. Napier Napper, with a profound apology to Miss Steere, removed his, seemingly unconscious of the fact that he lacked a shirt.

He struck the man once—only once. He aimed at the nose and struck the chin—right on the point.

Between them—he and the girl—they brought the man round in a quarter of an hour, and the first thing he did was to apologize to "the whitest little lady this side of the divide."

"If you're going to Calgary," said Mr. Napper suavely, "keep right along this track, and—good luck to you, sonny. I hope you'll find a new crib. But take my advice, and don't be revengeful. Revenge is the quickest way to jail that I know of."

"Thanks," said the man, in a quiet voice. "May I never meet you there."

For a long while after the man had gone the girl remained silent; then she slipped gently from the saddle, and held out her hand.

"A stranger to these parts?"

Her voice was soft and musical. He had expected a domineering tone, having regard to the almost masculine mode of attire and the rakish manner in which she sat her horse.

"I think so," he replied, with a puzzling air of uncertainty that immediately raises suspicion.

"Touring?"

"No; looking for work—looking, in fact, for Mr. William Steere."

"My father."

"I had already guessed that much," he said, without even a trace of a smile.

"I should like father to thank you for your kindness to me," she said, preparing to lead her horse.

"Thanks," he nodded; "but I would rather that you said nothing about it. You see—"

She glanced at him inquiringly.

"That fellow who took the count has got as much as he can carry, and your father might want to follow him up and give him more; and, besides, I'm looking for work—not rewards."

All the same, she told Mr. William Steere, who conducted Napier Napper into the most comfortable drawing-room he had been in since leaving England, twelve months previously.

"You stay here as my guest," said Mr. Steere peremptorily; "the man who stands by my children makes this house his home."

And once again Mr. Napper said "Thanks" in a stolid, indifferent manner, adding: "But I'd rather be on your pay sheet, sir."

Mr. Steere opened wide his eyes and stared at the curious mixture of bone

and sentiment, then: "What can you do?" he asked; and Mr. Napper briefly enumerated the many and varied tasks he had essayed in a short, though adventurous, career.

"I ain't got much use for a secretary, nor for a treasurer," Mr. Steere mused doubtfully; "but I'd give something to have a gentleman like you about the place to talk to sometimes."

Mr. Napper glanced at his own big frame, and smiled.

"Seems a waste of good material," he suggested. "I was hoping you were in need of a farm hand."

Mr. Steere shook his gray head, as though the visitor were incomprehensible.

"You're the quaintest thing I've struck for years," he muttered.

"How far are we from Calgary?" asked Mr. Napper, changing the subject so suddenly that the rancher gasped for breath.

"Fifteen miles as the crow flies."

"I know that crow!" said Mr. Napper caustically. "You must be lonely out here, Mr. Steere."

"We ain't overcrowded; but me and my girl try to make things run smoothly. Loneliness isn't always a question of isolation. When Jim was here—"

"Jim!"

"My boy—went to the old country five years ago—big man in his way now; too big to write to the old dad; but so long as he's making good, I don't mind. Well, when he was here, things were a trifle livelier. Great boy, Jim; regular mother's boy, but good as gold."

An open piano in the corner of the room caught the eye of Mr. Napper, and with a mumbled apology he crossed over to it.

"Jim's," said Mr. Steere laconically. "Joan has no use for music; always the ranch; she ought to have been the boy, she did."

Mr. Napper sat down, brushed the fair hair back, and ran his long fingers up and down the ivory keys. The refrain of an old English ballad came into his head. He had played no more than a dozen bars when Mr. Steere's heavy hand was laid on his shoulder.

"Not that," he said; "not that—that was Jim's favorite air, and it hurts now that he's away."

Mr. Napper rose, and said simply: "I'm sorry. What about that farm hand's place—the man who did me a good turn by trying to do you a bad one?"

They walked to the open window that looked out on the stockyard. Half a dozen red-shirted men, brawny of muscle and as brown as ripe grain in complexion, were wrestling with a mean-looking, wire-backed horse that seemed capable of doubling itself in two and springing in the air with the resiliency of an india-rubber ball. One of the men got in the way of the beast's forefeet as it brought them down sharply after rearing. The sound as he struck the fencing resembled the beat of a mallet on a muffled drum.

"That," said Mr. Steere, with a scowl, "means a week's sick pay. You see what is expected of a farm hand?"

Mr. Napper deliberately opened the French window, stepped out, and climbed the fence of the stockyard. The men turned, smiled, and winked at each other.

"What are you trying to do?" he asked of the foreman.

"Merely to break him into the saddle, sir; but he's that 'umble like, he won't stand the fuss."

Mr. Napper walked up to the horse's head, seized the bridle and long, straggling mane, and with a whoop swung himself onto the wire back. For three minutes there was fury in the stockyard. The unbroken horse did everything that was possible for a horse to do in order to get rid of an incumbent, but Mr. Napier Napper wrapped his long legs round the beast, and rode him to a standstill. And then he sauntered back to his host with a quiet smile playing about the corners of his mouth.

"When I mentioned all those 'ex's' just now, I forgot the circus," he said.

Mr. Napier Napper appeared to have reached his last "ex." Among the men on the ranch he speedily became a general favorite, and Mr. Steere decided,

in his own mind, that only Providence could have sent him so useful a help on a fifty-mile ranch. While Mr. Napper was made one of the household, as it were, assuming the rôle almost of a son, he insisted, in a quiet yet determined way, on being regarded as a servant, and he drew his salary accordingly.

Mr. Napper had been at Hope Ranch exactly six months when he did the last thing that he expected of himself—he fell in love. He realized the fact in a way that was characteristic of him—with the start of a sleepy man who suddenly remembers that he has to catch a train.

It happened in this way: Mr. Steere had ridden over to Calgary, and was not expected back till late in the evening. At the end of the day's work, Mr. Napper went into the drawing-room and commenced to play idly on the piano. When Joan entered the room, he was leaning back, his eyes fixed on the ceiling, and his fingers rambling softly through a haunting little melody. She sat near the piano, just where the red glow of the dying sun pinked her brown cheeks and sparkled in her eyes. Presently he turned toward her—and immediately the music ceased. Tears were running down her cheeks in quick little jerks.

"I wonder what were your thoughts as you played that melody?" she whispered.

And he answered abruptly:

"Supper!"

For the first time in his life Napier Napper had come under the fire of a woman's eyes, and, like the raw recruit that he was, he had ducked instinctively.

She watched him with the quiet interest of a woman who has suddenly come upon a new proposition in life, and there was a soft, meditative complacency in her eyes when she spoke again.

"To-day I met Jobman, the farm hand you thrashed the evening I first met you."

An expression of anxiety came over his face at once.

"He didn't——"

"Oh, no," she shortened. "In fact, he

apologized in a most abject manner for what occurred on that day."

"Good Jobman!"

"And he asked me to thank you for helping him into that new place in Calgary."

"He should have been a woman," said Mr. Napper. "He talks too much for a man."

She flushed ever so slightly.

"And you gave him your first month's salary! Why did you do that?"

"Rather poor payment for his berth, after all."

"A regular Don Quixote—that's what father calls you."

She was leaning back in her chair surveying him thoughtfully.

"Do you know?"—she hesitated—"do you know that sometimes you fright me?"

"In what way?" he asked quickly.

"There seems to be something behind your eyes that suggests almost tragedy."

The flippancy that prompted itself was thrust back. He left the piano and sat near her; so near that the long fingers of his right hand stretched over the arm of her chair and touched her arm.

"No," he said slowly, and almost beneath his breath. "I don't suppose there's tragedy there; in fact, it's more like comedy; and now that you've mentioned the matter, Joan"—he had called her by that name after the first few weeks of his residence at Hope Ranch—"I realize that it's not right of me to live here enwrapped with mystery. You and your father have been good to me all the time I have been here, and perhaps an oyster would have been more confiding than I, but—"

"Please don't say another word about it." She was on her feet. "Out here we judge a man for what he is, not what he has been."

Gently he motioned her back to the chair.

"What 'has been' leaves me with an easy conscience. Just now you called me a Don Quixote; many a time I've tried to explain myself to myself; you're the first to fix up a decent description. All my life I seem to have been looking

round for trouble—other people's trouble. You see, I never had much ambition of my own; it has always been that of somebody else that I have tried to realize. My parents"—his voice sank to a whisper—"died when I was a lad at school, and the only thing I had to live for was 'self.' Always I've been what men call a 'lucky dog'—meaning that I tumbled into appointments with the ease of a small boy tumbling into a fish pond. But envy is very shortsighted."

"Why—why?"—somehow her hand had become entangled in his long fingers, and she was breathing hard—"why did you come out here? There! I'm only a woman, with a woman's curiosity."

"Why?" he echoed. "Oh, because"—he looked her straight in the eyes and his lips trembled—"because I'm a lucky dog, I suppose."

A long silence followed.

"I don't suppose the luck will last," he sighed, at last.

"Do you mean that—that you would like to stay here—always?"

"I mean," he said, with a courageous burst, "that I would be happy, infinitely happy, if I were near you, Joan. I would like to feel that I was going to be near you always; but there's something—"

"Something behind your eyes or your heart?" she laughed. "Come, you dear old Quixote, drop your mystery and smile in the old way."

He stepped away from her, away into the shadows of the room.

"Joan," he said, "I told you just now that I was never ambitious. I am now. Within a few years I shall have a ranch of my own, and then—well, I'll tell all that's in my mind. I can see that all these years I've played the fool. I've been too much of a—as you say—a Don Quixote. From this day I'm going to think only of myself and one other person. I'm going to start a new furrow—if the weather holds good."

But that very night the weather broke, and broke badly. The mercury which

had risen so steadily throughout the day dropped with dramatic suddenness.

It was late at night when Mr. William Steere returned from Calgary. Joan and the servants had long since retired, and Mr. Napier Napper was curled up on the lounge in the smoking room, reading a month-old English newspaper. Instinct, more than the frown on the face, told him that Mr. Steere had discovered something—hopelessness rather than tact dictated the sang-froid he affected.

"Joan retired?" Mr. Steere's voice was harsh and cold.

Mr. Napper merely nodded affirmatively.

"Something happened to-day—in Calgary."

Again the fair head on the lounge nodded mechanically.

"It happens that my boy Jim is coming home; he'll be here to-morrow. I was keeping the news as a surprise for Joan. It will be her birthday." He paused and fidgeted in his chair. "I was talking to the Canadian agent of the bank—the bank that Jim's in; and he—he told me something." Again he paused, and there was a hard look in his eyes.

Mr. Napper rose from the lounge, stretched himself wearily; then, leaning across the table and riveting his gaze on the man sitting opposite, he said in a painfully calm voice:

"How long will you give me to clear out?"

Mr. Steere gripped the arm of his chair.

"You're the man, then—the man he meant?"

"I suppose so," said Mr. Napper, in a tired voice.

"The man, John Dennett, who disappeared the night before the bank missed the five hundred pounds?"

"Yes, yes, John Dennett, alias Napier Napper, the 'Jonah.'"

"The man my son saved from being prosecuted by borrowing five hundred pounds from me with which to recoup the bank?"

"I was a friend of your son," said Mr. Napper quietly; "but I didn't know that he had done so much as that."

Mr. Steere rose from his chair.

"I'm sorry," he muttered, "because I—we had learned to like you; but I come of an honest stock, Mr. Dennett, and my house cannot be a refuge for— for thieves. There's a train goes west from Calgary at six o'clock to-morrow morning." He drew out a pocketbook, and threw a bundle of notes toward the other man. "There's a couple of hundred dollars; perhaps you'll need the money."

"Thanks," said Mr. Napper; "but I never accept charity from any one." And he walked to the door.

"No," snapped Mr. Steere angrily. "Perhaps you get it in another way."

"Perhaps," replied Mr. Napper.

Long before six o'clock he was on his way to Calgary, his luggage—or, rather, all that he thought he should need—packed in the old knapsack. He had not said "good-by" to any one. He deemed it best to slip away quietly. But under her bedroom door he had slid a simple note:

I'm sorry that I couldn't start that new furrow, but the weather didn't give me a chance.

THE JONAH.

He walked for two hours, aimlessly, blindly; and when he reached the prairie that lay between Calgary and the beginning of William Steere's wheat area, he walked another couple of miles, and then lay down to think things out. In a humble way, Mr. Napper was a philosopher; but there are times when philosophy mocks at him who philosophizes. For exactly an hour he lay back in the long, rank grass endeavoring to formulate some plan for future action. The sun, even at that early hour of the day, was excessively hot, and he was beginning to dream of a cool, green island shaded by palms, when the faint shouting of some one in the far distance reached his ears.

"Fire!"

He leaped to his feet. The breeze was westerly, and he immediately turned in that direction. Less than a thousand yards from the spot on which he was standing, a billow of gray-black smoke rolled toward him. And away

to the south he could see the figures of ranchers and cow-punchers galloping in all directions that they might give warning.

During his stay at Hope Ranch he had witnessed many prairie fires, and had helped to extinguish, or, rather, to limit their area. Therefore, he realized at once the danger of his situation, and with the regular stride and swing of the athlete he made for the south. He had been running for quite twenty minutes when he stumbled over a boy of five playing in the long grass of the prairie. It was the boy of Jobman, the farm hand whom he had thrashed and subsequently succored.

"Tommy, my boy," he shouted, "you've got to run; the prairie's on fire."

The child started up with a cry of alarm, and held out its arms to him. Napier Napper glanced back at the approaching billow of smoke. It was perilously near.

"Up you jump!" he cried, making a "back" for the boy, and then once more he fell into the long, swinging stride.

The child directed him, for the weight on his shoulders bowed his head, so that he could not very well look straight in front of him.

He seemed to have been running for hours, for weeks, for years. The weight on his shoulders grew almost intolerable, and his knees began to weaken under the strain. The atmosphere grew denser. He could hear an ominous crackling—and sanctuary seemed so far away.

"Tommy, old man," he gasped, "do you know of a pond about here, because if you don't——"

"Pond farther on," said the lad. "Little bit more, little bit more. Ain't it hot?"

He reached the pond safely, but all the blood in his body seemed to have rushed to his head. The smoke cloud was only a hundred yards away when he slipped into the shallow water, holding the boy under so that only his nose and mouth were exposed, and even then protecting him with his own arched body. As the smoke and flame came

down upon him, he whispered something, and then closed his eyes.

When Mr. Napier Napper, the "Jonah," awoke twelve hours later—he had slipped into unconsciousness the moment the crowd of cow-punchers lifted him and the child from the pond—he was lying in the humble cottage of Jobman, the farm hand, and there was a buzz of voices in the room consequent on the opening of his eyes.

Some one—a woman—was bathing his forehead, and, as he put up his hand, he touched his fizzled scalp. There was scarcely a hair on it! His eyes blinked in the uncertain light, but they clearly distinguished the face of Joan Steere. She was kneeling by the side of the bed, and her face was deathly white.

"How's the kiddie?" he asked, in a whisper; and a young fellow who might have been the twin brother of Joan bent down, and said: "He's all right, old fellow; don't worry."

And as the eyes of Mr. Napper looked on the figure of Mr. Steere's son, one of them deliberately winked, and Napier said: "Cheer-ho, Jim!"

Then the man went out of the room, leaving him with her.

"Well," he said, in a whisper, "how has it turned out?"

She was holding his bandaged hand. "You're coming back, 'Jonah'; say you are," she breathed.

"You don't want a——" He stopped, and his lips closed with a snap.

"No, darling," she whispered; "but we want a Don Quixote. Jim has told father the whole story; how you, you great-hearted, stupid fellow—no, not stupid, darling—how you took his burden on your broad shoulders because he had a sister and a father, while you had nobody."

"Nobody," he smiled. "I never had anybody to call my own."

She kissed him tenderly as her father came into the room.

"You're coming back, 'Jonah,'" she laughed softly. "You're coming back to start that new furrow!"

He nodded and smiled.

IN MUSICLAND

By William F. Armstrong



BAYREUTH, in an off season, when the great crowd drawn by Festival performances is absent, is one of the most delightful places in all Germany to visit. That which made it yet more delightful last summer was the presence of singers, rehearsing with Siegfried Wagner for the presentations to begin there next July. The combination of their society and the charm the old town offers made an ideal experience.

When the world musical flocks to Bayreuth, as it will be doing shortly, the long avenue leading to the Festspielhaus is, at four o'clock in the afternoon, a study in nationalities. The interminable procession, winding between lines of green trees up the long hillside toward the theater which Wagner built to hold performances of his gigantic dreams, makes a picture to be found nowhere else in all the world. The medley of faces, of color in costume, of unique, often freakish personalities, grows stranger by reason of the time-worn town from which it issues, silhouetted against green, flowering fields, like those in the Good Friday scene in "Parsifal." A procession of to-day, emerging from a setting of the semimedieval; a feverish, curiously silent throng, each one intent upon the music drama to be presently unfolded; there with grim determination to find the "atmosphere" which has given Bayreuth a quasi-religious aspect to the art world.

Between acts, in long waits in slanting sunshine, there is the unideal clatter of plates and beer mugs at the restaurant across the way; then a rush back at the signal for the opening of the next act, which leaves outside a grateful silence, broken only by occasional bursts of music from the theater. To those who have no love of crowds, no matter how deep and quiet their attention, such moments will have, as they had for me, a greater charm spent without instead of within the Festspielhaus.

The old town and I seemed left alone to the yesterday of its rightful solitude, the long twilight creeping on, faint lights springing out at isolated intervals, and century-ago-built towers, black in their outline through a deepening purple haze. Art and nature always clash, unless the one play ultra-subordinate part to the other. In those moments the subdued fragments of orchestra and voices took on an unreal realness; they gave flashes of utterance in a scene where tangible utterance had been otherwise denied.

Bayreuth is a town of independent charm, one that will fade, for progress has not spared it in the tremendous material awakening of Germany; but, in surroundings, the ideal there is still pronounced enough in spite of needle-like factory chimneys, with long, lazy threads of smoke—and it will have always as indestructible possession, which no materialism can affect, profound and intimate memories of Wagner, of Liszt,

and of dear Jean Paul Friedrich Richter, whose exquisite thoughts sprang up before more widely triumphant musical ones, and like the flowers that grow in crevices of the weather-beaten castle tower built there by early margraves. Stretches of old-world architecture, with steep, tiled roofs; the jangle of age-worn bells; high, wooded hills about the town, go still to make Bayreuth a place that fits in with these traditions.

In the absorbing claim of Festival performances, people, for the most part, go away with a jumbled recollection of the town, and neatly done-up packages of reproductions of the Holy Grail of "Parsifal"; many photographs of Wahnfried, of Wagner, of the theater, and of the singers there. But the real fragrance of the peace and charm of the old place has quite escaped them.

I got back to it in that off season at a moment so opportune that no amount of planning, but only accident, could have fully realized it. How was I to know that those singing folk songs that night down in the garden of Hotel Zur Post were among the artists chosen for next summer's Festival performances, and after search by Siegfried Wagner throughout Germany? A baritone of rare quality, and a tenor, brilliant, powerful, carried above the rest as the voices floated upward.

In the gathering twilight, a soldier stood in a neighboring courtyard in the midst of laurel trees and red geraniums; doves were fluttering about him, resting on his shoulders, head, and breast, and fighting to feed from his hand. The old, remembered songs, so exquisitely given, and the homely scene below the windows, had combined to make that longing for a friendly word almost unconquerable.

Then there came a knock and message at the door. The singers had sent to ask that I would join them.

The days and nights that followed were among the most beautiful that my life, or, I fancy, any life, can hold. Simple, lovable, great people they proved to be, working with persistence during their holidays from various opera houses that they might learn to do bet-

ter still those Wagnerian rôles they had been chosen to do because already they did them so well.

The Hotel Zur Post is now the Bayreuth home of artists; others drift into its shady garden at Festival times to get a friendly word, or, if a rank outsider, a nearer glimpse of some favorite celebrity. On the ground floor of the place, though, there is a wainscoted room where none but the elect may enter; their autographed photographs hang thick upon its walls, singers, conductors, composers, Hans Richter heading the list; and under his portrait he has written: "To the nourishing father of artists, Richard Beck."

For Herr Beck, the owner of it all, has inherited a wonderful gift not only of supplying the material needs of the artistic, but of smoothing out their little complexities, which, to him, are no complexities at all, because he himself has the temperament that goes with them. Half musical Europe is his friend and brother.

But there were no masses to drift in last summer. The little company of singers, Herr Beck, and I had the tree-shaded garden, and the big, cool halls of the restaurant to ourselves, dining in the old German fashion at noon, with the supper at twilight, and ending only when the last song or story after it was done.

There were flying sights of the outlying country from the motor car of Herr Ernst Raven, Wagnerian tenor of the opera at Cassel; talks with Herr Geisse-Winkel, baritone at Wiesbaden, and the *Kothner* of this year's Festival, as we sat on a bench in front of the hotel, watching the lazy street sloping away below us; loiterings in the garden with Hermann Weil, baritone of the Stuttgart Royal Opera, and soon to be the *Hans Sachs* in Bayreuth "Meistersinger" performances; glimpses, between hard work, of Heinrich Hensel, heroic tenor at Carlsruhe, and a brief sight at noon of Court Kapellmeister Rother, the composer of "Mai Braut"; at twenty-four "arrived," and coworker with Siegfried Wagner in rehearsing artists.

Frau Geisse-Winkel, wife of the baritone, and the only woman in the party, brought a gentle charm that made every man there adore her. She was the "little mother" at table, which, for all the interested care she gave each one of us, might have been of her own, instead of Herr Beck's providing. And as for night and song, let those who say there are no singers left in Germany have such evenings as we had at Hotel Zur Post, with the artists whom Siegfried Wagner had found in winter journeys between Festivals.

Among these were three who would go far toward helping to rehabilitate the old-time splendors of German opera at the Metropolitan; and one of them, Hensel, by happy chance, will be heard there next season. It was Andreas Dippel who, by great good fortune, found him. The new tenor, of medium height and fine physique, served his term in the army as mounted cavalryman at Karlsruhe, and would have later entered as officer but for the stronger call of the stage. At Castle Rüpper, the seat of his father in the Pfalz, his educational advantages were complete. In operatic service, Hensel has sung at Wiesbaden, Amsterdam, Munich, and in all the German Festivals; at Brussels in the "Ring," when it was given there for the first time in German; will make his London debut at Covent Garden next May, and after that at Bayreuth sing the *Loge*, and either *Walter* or *Parsifal*.

The two others, baritones, are complete opposites in contrast. Hermann Weil, of commanding figure, a handsome, genial fellow, fits in the rôle of *Sachs* quite as if he had stood for its model. Siegfried Wagner heard him in the part last winter at the Stuttgart Opera, where he is now singing. From the season's close there, and throughout his holidays, Weil studied three hours a day with Wagner over details of his rôle. When I met him, he had been six weeks in Bayreuth, and not yet begun on the second act.

Despite the gibes that one hears not infrequently, it is that invariable slow thoroughness which gives the Bayreuth

singer an authority not found in other Wagnerian ones. The fact remains, too, that the artists have a better command of parts studied there than of any others in their repertoires.

Geisse-Winkel represents, at his best, another type of rôle than his two Wagnerian colleagues. The "Trompeter von Säkkingen" music, and fragments from Lortzing's "Zar und Zimmermann," he would sing of a morning with a mellowness and smooth lyric beauty that recalled Reichmann.

In the old days when Ems was famous, the baritone's father was physician to Emperor Wilhelm there. He, himself, had completed his studies in mining engineering before he turned to opera, in which he has sung for the last nine years at Wiesbaden, making, meanwhile, many appearances as "guest" elsewhere; assisting for two seasons at Bayreuth Festivals, and last autumn appearing as soloist in the production at Munich of Mahler's "Eighth Symphony."

Bayreuth is intimately, genuinely German. If, in its Festspielhaus, art sits enthroned upon the hill, the carnal wants of man are well met in the valley. In early morning all the town is either going or coming, absorbed in marketing. Oxen, hitched to primitive carts loaded with wood, drowse peacefully between piles of carrots, cucumbers, and cabbages, spread out under big umbrellas. Farther down are flowers, old-fashioned garden ones, still wet with dew, and of a homely beauty. Along the curb, edging a great, cobbled open space, are old women with baskets of butter and eggs, and other old women with bags of ducks and chickens.

Buying and selling there become an earnest function; sympathetic groups will congregate about a *hausfrau* weighing in her hand successive chickens drawn from a bag's depths, until she has tested which victim is plumpest. Another, after deliberation almost devotional, will march away serenely content in duty done, under each arm a fat duck, quacking in terrified premonition of the oven. Even children are impressed into service, to bear with stolid

deference cabbages and other vegetable treasures, held well aloft and carefully, as if they were so many Grails in "Parsifal."

Beyond this quarter of the town come the old palaces, picturesque and richly colorful; the Royal Opera House, serene in a century and a half of ornate existence; rows of shops, in houses once the homes of foreign ministers of the margrivial times; the garden arbor of the poet Richter; the house where Liszt died, and all the points known or unknown to Festival tourists, according to the haste or delay of their departure.

But over it all, stronger than any impressions left on the town by dead and gone margraves, is the living influence of the family of Wagner. The Festspielhaus, and the throngs it brings; the traditions of the composer's life, and of his colleagues' presence there, make a new epoch which has lifted the little spot into the world's familiar knowledge.

Additional factors in the situation are the dominant hold that Frau Cosima Wagner took on things after her husband's death, and the united front which her five children make in every move affecting their combined interests. This unity, aside from blood attachment, finds foundation in the permeating intellectuality of the mother, and in diverting attacks by those inimical to her long regency of Festival direction.

While Frau Wagner is not aged, in present-day reckoning, her life has played a part of tremendous forcefulness beyond any normal powers of rallying or resistance. From 1865, when she began at Munich to aid Wagner in rehearsals of his music dramas, down through the years after his death, when she assumed alone his labors in their Bayreuth presentation, she knew no rest. As an example of wifely fidelity to the life work and ideals of her husband, she is an empress among women. That other side of her character, which seems, in instances, to arouse strong animosity, will be forgotten, and death will place her among the ablest and most noted women of the century.

It is no longer possible for her to take any part in Bayreuth management, nor can the subject be mentioned to her. Her days are passed in absolute retirement; but at Wahnfried there is in the close devotion of her children very much to make an Indian summer of happiness. Her daughters, Daniela, the wife of Professor Thode, of Heidelberg University, and the widowed Countess Gravina, are often with her; Isolde, wife of the imperial Russian conductor, Beidler, has a villa near by; Eva Wagner, wife of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the clever author, is her constant, close companion, and the director of her household; Siegfried, gradually advancing in the artistic work at the Festspielhaus, now fulfills with splendid energy the part once valiantly taken by Frau Wagner. In this Frau Thode is his active aid, superintending the costuming of next season's presentations.

Wahnfried remains much as it was in Wagner's lifetime; an avenue of trees, with branches touching overhead, and a ranker growth of ivy about the bronze bust of Ludwig II, the man whom fate allowed to be his instrument of strength, are, perhaps, the only marks of outward change. Within, the sunny room to the left of the big entrance hall seems the most friendly and livable, with its grand piano, cavernous chairs, a desk at which the composer once wrote, and walls lined with many portraits, the best of all Wagner's own, painted by Lembach.

There is something spectacular about the vast, lofty, richly decorated apartment adjoining, onto which the hall directly leads, and where Wagner entertained distinguished guests. His writing table there, with closed portfolio, just as he last folded it, his souvenirs from royalties grouped about it as he left them, have been covered with glass since that fatal reception in 1882, when two valuable articles, never to be traced, were missing. The mistake so often made in describing this as the spot where he composed, arose likely from the fact that the little room on the floor above, which was in reality his study, has never been entered by any since his death.

In that other apartment, one turns from Lembach's portrait of Frau Wagner to studiously linger before the canvas Jonkowsky painted, which shows her slightly older, slightly gray; but it shows, too, the ideal in the woman Wagner loved; the high intellectuality, the extreme sensitiveness, the thorough femininity, and the aristocratic grace.

A particularly interesting high relief of Wagner, one which has never yet been copied or made public, is in the study at Mr. Chamberlain's apartment, just outside Wahnfried's grounds. It is the work of Gustav Kietz, the sculptor, whose brother, Ernst Kietz, a painter, was the devoted friend of Wagner during those hard years in Paris when he knew hunger. Partially modeled in 1881, when "Parsifal" rehearsals were in progress, the final sitting for it was granted in the following year, shortly prior to the composer's departure to Venice, and his death there. Until 1896, the gyps original lay in a corner of Kietz's studio in Dresden, where by chance impulse he showed it to a strong family friend of Wahnfried, Carl Friedrich Glasenapp. On his order it was done into marble, and twelve years later found its way to Bayreuth as wedding present on the author's marriage with Eva Wagner.

The modeling is clear, but not overly firm, and the expression of a serener gentleness than many have portrayed him, though with less of that vital and uncompromising strength shown in familiar portraits. As a contemporary record of his completion of "Parsifal," it is not unlikely that his mental mood and a calmer peace toward his life's end are transcribed there with fidelity.

It was a rare afternoon of blue, and white, and sunshine that Herr Raven, Herr Beck, and I went to Rollwenzel, where Jean Paul, as the Bayreuthers affectionately call him, sought a greater quiet than even their town gave him in which to do his writing.

Before the start was made, Raven, a machinist until he became a tenor, played the part of a modern *Siegfried*, tinkering his car into condition in the hot courtyard. Big, gay-hearted, he

kept on singing with fresh, boyish vigor, until we darted, a streak of carmine, across green, hilly country, to the little inn, where in rain, shine, or snowy weather Jean Paul daily tramped for twenty years, a bag of books slung from his shoulder, a knotted staff in hand. There, on fair summer days, he lingered under broad lindens in the garden until his less poetic wife sent their children at twilight to remind him to come home.

It is a little room, though, on the second floor of the inn, and reached by winding, creaking stairs, that holds the closest memories of him. Swallows have built nests over the doorway, and flutter in and out, just as he would have loved to see them, all undisturbed. A corner of the door is sawed away to allow passage for his hostess' cat, who doubtless many a chill hour crept in to warm herself beneath the grateful glow of the old stove, holding in its upper panel a Watteau scene, and in its lower, in odd contrast, one showing the Marriage at Cana in Galilee.

On a chair outside that swallow-nested doorway, Frau Rollwenzel herself sat by the hour and knitted while Richter wrote, then called her in to read aloud what he had written. Tradition says that on her criticism rested its fate, and that he destroyed every line which she pronounced unworthy of him. Her cap rests under glass on the age-blackened oak table, near by a manuscript of his in which the ink is faded, and to which her eager ears once likely listened.

A little, narrow sofa, a tiny mirror, a chair or two, and a quaint chest complete the meager furnishings. In one corner is a bust of the poet. The ceiling is so low that one standing upright can almost touch it. From the window is a view of the Fichtelgebirge, stretching green and shadow-mottled for miles, a splendid, peaceful picture.

On the simple poorness of the room the poet has left the impress of his heart indelibly; the thoughts he shaped there, world big, world wide in the beauty of their contents; the human side of him, his love of man, of nature, of humble, living things, make his very presence seem, after long years, vivid and abso-

lute; so vivid that even the casual hush their voices, as if Jean Paul had only fallen asleep and must not be disturbed. To me it brought a deeper, far more lasting feeling, because of all these things, in hallowed, bare surroundings, than the semispectacular luxury of Wahnfried; the poor, simple world of a man whose mind held another world more sublimely beautiful than hands ever created.

The climax of those delightful hours at Bayreuth came in a musicale on the final night there. It happened to be the anniversary of Herr and Frau Geisse-Winkel's wedding. At supper in the garden, each man of us had brought her flowers, until the table and a chair at her side were piled with them. It was a picture to see those two sitting there; he trying to veil the pride he felt in her, gazing down steadfastly at his pipe as he puffed away; she, her face alight with all the sweet charm of the moment, tremulous in her appreciation of our own. Most likely, until that episode, she had not realized what her thoughtful kindness had meant to us, too.

The dusk had scarcely come when we gathered in the artists' room of the hotel. Candles were lit on the piano. Above, dim lights from a chandelier left all the pictured musicians along the

walls to look down on us from shadow. On a table at the lower end of the room was a great bowl of strawberry punch; behind it, the little frau presided; at her side her husband. In the midst of the group was Herr Beck, none the less an artist than the rest, because his heart was all he had to sing with.

Weil started the night with the great opening air of "The Flying Dutchman," his rich, resonant voice splendid in the dramatic fervor of its delivery, sweeping him into forgetfulness of surroundings until he presently began to act. Then came more Wagner from him and from Hensel, who gave with magnificent brilliance music of *Siegfried*, *Sieg-mund*, *Walter*; Geisse-Winkel sang from "Trompeter," and things by Lortzing; after that followed *lieder*, his wife taking up the verses here and there with a rare sweetness.

How poorly any great function, where one or all of them had been paid to sing, would have shone beside it! This Brotherhood of Artists, where every good point found instant, keen appreciation that inspired a growing crescendo of fervor until the resource of each was fired to its limit. Only midnight brought good-bys, and to me a recollection of Jean Paul's own line: "In Bayreuth my moments were roses."



LOVE

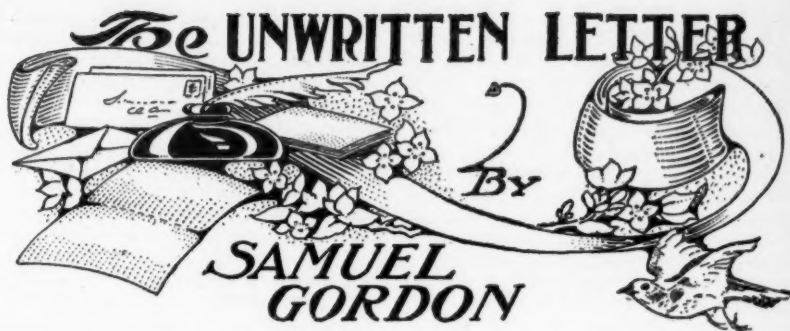
SINCE I have loved I am more wise;
I see the soul and heart
More than the shape of eyes and lips,
More than the sordid part.

Since I have loved I am more pure,
Quicker to seek the good,
Slower to hate, and more alive
To God and Brotherhood.

GERTRUDE BROOKE HAMILTON.

The UNWRITTEN LETTER

By
SAMUEL GORDON



KENNETH ANDERTON remained seated at the table, though it was some little time since he had finished his breakfast. Every now and then, while apparently absorbed in his newspaper, he glanced at the door through which he every moment now expected his wife to enter. If she did not come soon, he would have to miss the earlier train to town. She was never down very early. He often wondered, though he never dreamed of asking her, whether she purposely delayed her appearance so as to give herself as little as possible of his company.

She was rather later than usual today. He was just about to touch the bell to inquire of the maid if there was any cause for it when Mrs. Anderton came in. She nodded a "good morning" without looking at him, and, sitting down, at once proceeded to open and immerse herself in the letter which the morning's mail had brought her from her sister in Jamaica.

Anderton watched her furtively over the edge of his sheet. She had not changed much since their marriage. That was seven years ago, and she must be thirty-two now. The face was, perhaps, a little faded, and the corners of her mouth drooped in a tired sort of way; but otherwise the clear, pure outline was the same; the regular, spiritual features had remained soft and girlish. It was the face of a woman capable of holding any man's interest and love.

Anderton sighed inaudibly as he rose

from the table. His wife had finished her letter, and was putting it back into the envelope. She vouchsafed him no information or comment on its contents. That would have been contrary to long-established practice. For years there had been a tacit understanding between them to keep their several affairs to themselves.

"Would you please manage to be home a little earlier for dinner tonight?" she said to him across her shoulder.

"Why?" he asked quickly.

"I have arranged to go up to town to hear the new Polish violinist the papers are talking about so much."

"Arranged?" he echoed. "With whom?"

"With whom?" she echoed, in her turn, with evident surprise. "With Mr. Craven, of course."

"Oh, yes—Laurie," he said, nodding with a vague sort of understanding. "Very well. I shall be back by half-past six."

As Anderton made his way to his office, he tried to analyze to himself, for the hundredth time, the mysterious process by which he and his wife had arrived at the stage of being practically strangers to one another. He admitted that, to some extent, it might have originated in his own reserved, undemonstrative disposition.

Then he had never been quite certain whether his wife loved him. He was some twelve years her senior, and from the first he had had a dim idea that she

had married him mainly out of gratitude. Her father had been one of his business connections who had fallen on evil days, and whose last years of ill health and commercial trouble he had solaced by a series of clumsily concealed acts of kindness.

It seemed to Anderton that Pauline had married him with a half-resentful consciousness of having to make good her father's obligations to his benefactor. It had not been a good beginning. The girl's sunny nature had been blighted by the frost of adversity, and had not recovered in the warmer atmosphere of the comfortable home Anderton had provided for her.

That implied another mistake he had made. To increase his resources for giving her the good things of life, he had worked at his business early and late, leaving her to her own devices to pass the long spells of solitude in their suburban home. They had few tastes in common, and fewer opportunities for making them so. His wife had strong leanings toward the artistic side of things; he himself was a hard-headed, practical man of affairs.

In the beginning, he had occasionally accompanied her to concerts and the opera. That came to an end when he fell asleep during a performance of "Die Meistersinger"—he was afraid he must have snored. Picture galleries bored him, and he had not enough tact to disguise the fact from her. So their paths had imperceptibly diverged more and more. And there were no children to take each by the hand and lead them together again.

That was bad enough, but there was worse to come. It came in the shape of Lawrence Craven. He was a distant relative of Anderton's, and had ventured to London from the Midlands to follow up a few successes he had achieved as a composer. Anderton made him very welcome.

By the time it struck him to consider whether he had been wise in doing so, Craven had become too much of an institution at Oaklands to be uprooted for mere reasons of conjecture. Sometimes Anderton went so far as to wonder, in

an apologetic sort of way, whether there really was anything more between Craven and his wife than the camaraderie based on a common love of music.

Homely adages, such as "None so blind" and "Where ignorance is bliss," occurred to him. He looked at his icicle of a wife, and laughed them to scorn. But, while a man can create his own darkness, it is difficult for him to guard against revelation.

It came to him this very evening, when, mindful of his wife's request, he caught an earlier train home. The footpath across the fields would shorten the walk from the railway station by yet another minute or two. His heart was strangely full of new thoughts, new hopes, this sweet-scented, late-summer evening.

There was no garden gate proper, and he therefore had to squeeze through the hole in the tall hawthorn hedge that skirted the back of the house. He could enter by the French windows of the sitting room that stood level with the ground. But halfway down the middle walk of the flower beds he came to a sudden halt. His line of vision could travel straight into the room of which the curtains had been but partially drawn.

In the low light he saw his wife in the embrace of Lawrence Craven, and Craven was covering her face with passionate kisses. For a moment or two Anderton stood still, mechanically shading his eyes with his hand. Then carefully, gingerly he squeezed himself out again through the hedge to make a more conventional entrance by the front door. How very imprudent of them! Suppose anybody else had seen them like that!

He was quite gay at dinner, in marked contrast to Craven, who wore a moody and distracted air. The cunning young dog—to put on a mask of gloom, when all the while his heart must be bright with laughter within him! With self-torturing bravado, Anderton could not forbear from feeling his pulse, as it were. Pauline had left the two men alone to go and put on her hat and coat.

"I suppose you will be coming back to-night?" Anderton said offhand.

"I don't think so."

"You won't?" asked Anderton, astonished.

"No; I shall see Pauline to Waterloo, and John is meeting her with the trap this end."

"But why?"

"Oh, I have to be in town early to-morrow. I have an appointment with my publisher."

"Oh, of course, in that case——" Anderton broke off, and then resumed in a tone of apparent embarrassment: "I've been wanting to say it to you for some time, Laurie; but it's awfully good of you to put yourself to so much trouble for Pauline. It hardly seems worth your while. I understand you are getting a very busy man?"

Craven's face took on a queer smile. Then he said slowly: "Well, perhaps you're right, old chap."

"Why, that sounds jolly rude," exclaimed Anderton, with a boisterous laugh.

"Now that I come to think of it, it does," said Craven, with a touch of defiance; "but——"

"What sounds rude?" asked Pauline, who had reëntered noiselessly, drawing on her coat.

"Laurie will tell you as you go along. You'll have to look pretty sharp if you want to catch that seven-thirty-three."

But, despite the admonition, Pauline turned back for an instant at the door.

"I hope you won't feel dull," she said tentatively.

"Oh, no fear of that. I have plenty to do."

And, indeed, he had his hands full to-night. His head and his heart, too. At last he saw everything in its proper perspective. There was Craven's caution in refusing to see Pauline home. There was Pauline's trepidant anxiety which made her catch at chance words she had overheard. All went to emphasize the guilty secret which Craven and Pauline had been harboring between them—for how long? It didn't matter. The past no longer counted.

Yes, he had lost his wife—that was

very plain. What was he to do? Set in motion the ponderous machinery of the law, to mangle and crush her? Never! And the reason was obvious. The more he had doubted his wife, the more he had grown to love her. The more surely he had felt her slipping from him, the more frenzied had become the grasp with which he had tried to hold her. That love he must justify.

He suddenly realized that the center of gravity had shifted from himself to Pauline. The question no longer was what was to become of him, but how Pauline's happiness should be secured. Well, there was but one way of doing that effectively. He must clear out and leave her free to marry Craven. Very well; then, in Heaven's name, he would clear out.

"I shan't be back to-night," he said to her next morning. "I have to go on a journey."

"Will you be away long?" she asked.

"I really can't say."

She seemed to be revolving something in her mind.

"Will you write to me?" she said finally.

He was visibly taken aback. The question, no less than the one that had gone before, was most unusual. Then he shrugged his shoulders.

"If I have time I will."

"But I want you to make time. Promise."

"All right—since you make such a point of it."

"Yes, Kenneth, I do."

He had left her only a minute or two when, turning their interview over, he burst into an uncontrollable laugh. The idiot he was—how nearly he had allowed himself to be taken in again! Why, naturally, she wanted him to write. She wanted to keep herself informed of his whereabouts, so as to guard herself—and Craven—against unpleasant surprises. The thought kept Anderton company all the way to town. At the first gunsmith's he passed he bought a revolver.

He spent a couple of hours at the office making various arrangements, so as not to leave his partner in a more

hopeless muddle than he could help. By the afternoon he was in Cardiff, from where, by a branch line, he dived into one of the neighboring villages with an unpronounceable name. He found a nice little inn, and paid a week's lodging in advance. He was in no hurry to use that pistol of his. Having finished with the cares and worries of life, he felt himself entitled to a holiday, to a few full, complete days before he plunged into the great emptiness of the Beyond.

But the very next evening, as the shadows crept silently into the Welsh valley, a thought came to him that stung him like scorpions. By this time, no doubt, Craven was back at the suburban villa, and was kissing Pauline.

Resolutely he put the loaded weapon into his pocket. The proprietress of the inn was a nice, decent sort of body whom it would be a shame to put to any unnecessary inconvenience. The country around was very beautiful; there must be many a lovely spot to die in. He would try and find the loveliest—it was a luxury nobody could grudge him.

He had walked some two miles, diverging more and more from the beaten track, when he heard the furious barking of a dog, accompanied less distinctly by a human shout. Yielding to the impulse of the moment, he hastened in the direction of the sounds. Presently a strange scene struck his gaze.

A gesticulating yokel and his dog stood staring at a terrible object that lay on the ground, outlined against the dark-green sward in the glinting moonlight. It was the figure of a man, stark in death, the front part of his head entirely blown away. A revolver gleamed close to his right hand.

"Look what he been and done to oneself whatever," cried the yokel, ludicrously naïve.

Anderton nodded silently. The words he wanted to utter stuck in his throat. Was that how he would look presently?

"P'r'aps, indeed, you will stay here while me and the dog run and fetch the const'bles."

And, without waiting for Anderton's assent, the two took to their heels as

though whipped on by a battalion of furies.

Anderton had been slow to speech, but his mind was working at lightning speed. In a flash he had caught the potentialities of the tragedy with which fate had so strangely confronted him. This dead man, of the same height and build as himself, dressed in a suit of almost the same shade of serge—Eagerly Anderton stooped, and his hands fumbled in the man's clothes.

Quite so—it was as he had surmised. The man's pockets were empty—no, here was a handkerchief, of which, however, one corner—no doubt the one containing the initials—had been torn away. That and the savage disfigurement of the self-inflicted wound spoke the dead man's purpose with an unmistakable voice. He had desired urgently to cover up his tracks, to leave no clew to his history.

And, therefore, as he might be anybody—why should he not be Kenneth Anderton? The wild idea quivered through Anderton, making him grow hot and cold by turns. On the very brink of the grave, the love of life reared itself up rebelliously. His whole being echoed with the cry. Was it of cowardice? Was it of conscience? There was no time to argue it out.

Before he knew what he had done, he had sorted out a few unimportant letters he had about him, and had crammed them into the dead man's coat. Then he strode rapidly back to the inn. His step was light and springy, as it well might be. He had sloughed the weight of his personality, and left it in the keeping of his fellow conspirator, who lay there, the symbol of silently scornful acquiescence.

Nothing remained for him to do save to wait developments. There was no danger of any one connecting the rational, rather mild-mannered Mr. Wentworth Jones—for as such he passed at the inn—with the determined suicide, Kenneth Anderton.

From the papers, he saw that his scheme had proved a complete success. Mr. Anderton had been traced from Euston to South Wales, and this, to-

gether with the circumstantial evidence of the correspondence found on his body, had rendered any other investigation unnecessary. The usual verdict was returned.

A detail which made him smile rather grimly was the mention of the fact that Mrs. Anderton had been too upset to attend the funeral, and that the family had been represented solely by Mr. Lawrence Craven, the rising composer.

Anderton drew a deep breath of relief at the knowledge that he was now free to shape his future as he pleased. His course of action lay clear before him. He had packed away in his portmanteau about fifty pounds, which he had drawn with a vague idea of saving his wife the trouble and outlay that might be connected with his removal to London. That sum would be enough to take him to New York, and to furnish him with the initial capital for starting a business.

He was not too old to build up a new career, and he had every confidence in himself. There was no cause for him to put off his departure; and yet, hour after hour, he hung back. And then he all at once discovered that the reason for his delay was the burning desire to set eyes once more on his wife—or, rather, his widow, as he corrected himself, rather shocked at his frivolity.

Well, and why not? His first success had put the zest for adventure into his blood. The risk was not so very great as appeared on the surface. Besides, a pair of dark goggles, a week's growth of vigorous beard—

The same evening he was making his way along the deserted lane leading to his one-time home. For greater safety, he had alighted at the station before, where he could pass the officials without attracting notice. Just to see Pauline once more—his pulse beat quicker at the thought the nearer he approached its realization. He hurried along the same footpath as on that fatal night; he squeezed through the same hole in the hawthorn hedge; he was creeping along the same flower walk.

And then his heart turned sick with bitterness at the trick which Fate had played him. There was a light in the

sitting room, but a raw wind, the preface of autumn, was blowing, and the curtains were drawn securely across. Ah, so they had learned wisdom at last, just when it had become almost superfluous. There they were talking inside exactly as he had expected.

Well, if he could not see her face, he would at least listen to her voice for a little while before he went. Cautiously he ensconced himself behind the big gooseberry bush that flanked the left side of the window.

At first the stream of sound filtered through but thinly; then, when his ears grew accustomed, he heard plainly enough. And when he had listened a minute or two, his hand strayed to his heart to stop its tumultuous beating that threatened to make further hearing impossible. Those were strange words that came to him.

"And you can't make allowances?" Craven was saying.

"Not for such a thing," was her deliberate reply. "I saw the pain in your eyes—I was half crazy with self-reproach for having unwittingly caused it. It did not seem such a terrible thing for which you asked—just a brotherly kiss. But you deceived me; you went a great deal further than that. You did something for which I shall have to blush all the rest of my life."

"Perhaps, if you will give yourself time to forget—"

"I have no time to give to forgetting. I shall be too busy remembering all I should have been to my husband, and was not. I have a great deal to make good to him. If ever I should meet him again—"

"Meet him again? And you are still harping on that mad idea of yours! Why, the poor fellow is dead and buried."

"There may be meeting places we don't know of," she replied quietly. "At any rate, there is nothing left for us to discuss. You said good-by to me that night you put me into the train at Waterloo. I should not have seen you again, as you tell me, if nothing had happened. Well, let us pretend that nothing has happened."

"Pauline, only one word more——"

But Anderton did not stay to hear that one word more. He drew himself erect with the incredulous ecstasy of the paralytic who has recovered the use of his limbs; then he made his way to the front of the house, just as he had done that other evening. Amid the joyous jangle of his thoughts there sounded a distinct and practical note.

In doing what he was about to do, he might be incurring for himself the necessity to explain the circumstances that led to the dead stranger being mistaken for him. He laughed at the idea; explanations would be easy enough once he gave his mind to them. For the present he was intent on rectifying that much greater mistake he had made—the mistake in his wife.

At the bend of the lane he saw a figure skulking away; it was Craven. Anderton waited till he was out of ear-shot, and then knocked. He had left his latchkey behind, thinking he would have no further use for it. The maid who opened uttered a scream of terror, and made a convulsive attempt to close the door. Anderton brushed past her with a movement of irritation.

"Don't be a fool, Jane," he said, as he saw her shrink from him. "I see there has been some nonsense in the papers about my having done away with myself. I noticed it only this morning, and came home at once to clear up the matter. Where is your mistress?" And, without waiting for the still speechless girl's direction, he walked straight to the door of the sitting room.

It was a dangerous thing to do, but Pauline was a strong-minded woman, and would safely weather the shock. Besides, she had talked of meeting him again. What in the name——

But it was he who received the shock as he entered. She was sitting on the piano stool, with her back to him, her hands lightly fingering the keyboard. At the noise of the opening door, she turned, and the only change he observed in her was that her placid face assumed a glad, quiet smile as she rose to meet him. He remained motionless in the doorway.

"Come in, Kenneth. I have been expecting you," she said, her voice soft and caressing as he had never heard it before.

He began a reply, but broke off as his eyes took in her attire. She was wearing a gown of bright scarlet, against which her throat and face gleamed like marble. Not an inch of crêpe. His brain grew giddy. What evidence were her words when her actions told such a different tale? Not a stitch of black!

"I see what you mean," she said, following his gaze. "You are surprised that I am not in mourning. It doesn't seem very wifely, does it? You see," she went on solemnly, "I did not put on mourning for the same reason that I did not follow the funeral. I was certain the man they were burying was not my husband."

"Despite all the proofs to the contrary?" he could not help exclaiming.

"Ken—there was one proof that was missing."

"One proof?"

"The letter you did not write me. You promised to write, don't you remember?"

"Of course—of course," he said vaguely.

"Well, there had been no letter, and from that I knew that you had not put yourself beyond the possibility of keeping your promise."

He turned away to hide the flush of shame that purpled his face. Yes, this was the first promise he had made her which he had not intended keeping. And here she had been waiting and waiting for its fulfillment with an almost superhuman faith. The tears sprang to his eyes. This was the woman whom he had not trusted, whom he had not understood. But he would make her amends.

"Pauline," he said, and then stopped, for he could get no further.

"But for all that," she resumed, with a pensive smile, "I think I have made a mistake, and I have come to the conclusion never to believe in you again, Kenneth."

"What?" he cried, startled.

"No, no, don't be alarmed," she said, an infinite tenderness in her words. "I mean only that my heart lost touch with yours because I was unwise enough to trust you so implicitly. I took you too much for granted. The love that is built on rocks will grow like a rock—will petrify. The love that lasts is the love which balances itself constantly on

the edge of a precipice—it will keep alive through the very fear of death. Insecurity and suspicion are the very soul of it. Am I right, Kenneth?"

"Perfectly right, Pauline."

He could say it in all conscience. He had proved it at a cost which few people were asked to pay as the price of an eternal truth.



THE ROSE

I TOOK the love you gave, ah, carelessly,
 Counting it only as a rose to wear
 A little moment on my heart, no more;
 So many roses had I worn before,
 So lightly that I scarce believed them there.

But, lo! this rose between the dusk and dawn
 Hath turned to very flame upon my breast,
 A flame that burns the day long and the night,
 A flame of very anguish and delight
 That not for any moment yields me rest.

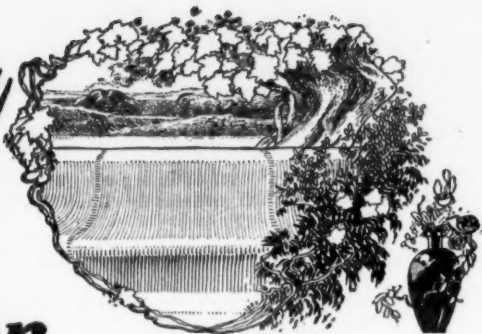
And I am troubled with a strange, new fear,
 How would it be if even to your door
 I came to cry your pitying one day,
 And you should lightly laugh and lightly say,
 "That was a rose I gave you—nothing more."

THEODOSIA GARRISON.

Rosemary

By

Owen Oliver



THERE'S Rosemary," said Doctor Tom Melstone. "That's for remembrance!"

"Ah!" said Doctor Jack. "Hallucination?"

He was a famous specialist in mental ailments, though he was barely thirty—ten years younger than his uncle—and he knew at a glance that the slight, pretty lady who came down the lane, carrying a baby, had trouble of the mind.

"I call it remembrance," said Doctor Tom. "Well, Angel? I thought we should meet you here. How are you, my dear?"

The girl—Doctor Jack thought her a girl of twenty, but, in fact, she was five years older—bowed and smiled. She had a girlish face and a girlish way, and she pushed her fair hair back with a girlish gesture.

"Baby is the tyrant who brings me here," she explained, in a soft, pleased voice. "She seems to like this quiet lane. You know, doctor, that my world is just baby—baby—baby! And you, of course!" She flushed prettily. "You haven't been to see us for three whole days. So she is a little—not disagreeable, only discontented. So am I."

Miss Angelica smiled at Doctor Tom very charmingly. It was plain that they were fast friends.

"And I," said he. "This is the tyrant who has been occupying me. My nephew, Doctor John Melstone. He

has come to me for a few days, and brought *his* baby. His wife is nursing her aunt. Jack, this is my best friend and patient."

"But you know there's nothing the matter with me," she stated.

"There is nothing the matter with you in either capacity, my dear. She is Mrs. Hall; but we call her Miss Angelica still. She persists in looking so young!"

She smiled with her head on one side.

"It is baby who keeps me young," she explained. "She is *such* a delight. I am afraid I bore people with her, Doctor John; more than most mothers do. But she is so pretty, and pink and white. I'd show you; but the doctor never will let me show her off to people."

She shook her head at Doctor Tom; and he looked at Doctor Jack with his lips moving in and out.

"You might show her to my nephew, I think," he said slowly.

Angelica hugged the baby a little closer with one arm, and uncovered its face; and Doctor Jack drew a sharp breath, like a hiss; for Angelica's baby was only a large doll! She was smiling with her whole soul at it. She did not take her eyes from her "baby" even when she spoke.

"You needn't try to say anything nice about her," she protested. "I don't expect other people to be silly about Rosemary only myself." She laughed the laugh of the girl mother. "And Doctor

Tom," she added, "because he is her godfather. He even chose her name. 'Rosemary. That's for remembrance!'"

Doctor Tom opened his mouth to speak, and closed it again. He looked appealingly at his nephew.

"She is very like her mother," Doctor Jack said gravely.

"Thank you!" Angelica dropped a gay little curtsy. "I never pretend that I don't like flattery." She smiled her girlish smile, and covered the face of wax. "And now she must go home to bed; and you mustn't desert us quite, doctor. Come in and bring Doctor John, won't you? Good-by."

She bowed, and walked on, and they stood looking after her, with their hats in their hands. She crooned to the "baby" as she went; bent her pretty face down to it, and lifted the handkerchief.

Doctor Jack took Doctor Tom's arm as they resumed their walk.

"Hallucinations are the cancers of the mind," he remarked. "You can cut them out—if they haven't infected the rest. Has this?"

"I—don't—know," said Doctor Tom slowly. "That's just it."

"Tell me about her," Doctor Jack suggested. "She's very sweet—wonderfully sweet!"

"She always was. She was about seventeen when I first knew her, and we were friends from the beginning. I thought at one time— But I was rather old for her, and I stood aside, and— She was engaged at eighteen, and married at nineteen; in the little church over there."

He pointed between the trees.

"He was a— Well, he's dead—dead a good many years. Never mind him. She came home after a few months, deserted and ill; a poor, white-faced, quivering little thing. I'd have liked to take him by the throat, and— However, she soon got over that. He had only caught a child's fancy. She didn't really love him; didn't pretend to grieve when he died. That was a month before the baby was born. She was very bright and patient; and after the baby came she was just her old self.

She seemed to think of nothing but the baby. It died. Man!"

He clutched Doctor Jack by the arm. "I spent half my nights for five weeks studying up things to try and save her baby; and knew there was no hope all the time! It died. I thought at first that she would die, too. Perhaps it would have been better if she had. And yet, I don't know. She sweetens life for some of us, and she is happy. It's strange how sensible she is in other things, though she's so young for her age. She seems to have stopped at twenty. She helps me a lot with the poor; and 'when baby has gone to bed' she'll sit and talk. She has such pretty, innocent thoughts. She plays and sings beautifully. I often take my violin up there in the evenings. She is fonder of me than of any one but the— the doll, and I— Sometimes God sees fit to try us pretty hard, old man."

Doctor Jack laid his hand gently on Doctor Tom's arm for a moment.

"How did it begin?" he asked. "The delusion?"

"She had brain fever; and she was always groping about with her arms, and trying to hug something to her, and crying for it. I could quiet her a bit, but no one else could; and I couldn't be there always. It was wearing her out; and her mother bought the doll and gave it to her to hold. It saved her life, and half of her reason. The other half— Well, you see. Can you do anything, old man?"

"I can't say until I've studied her carefully," Doctor Jack said. "Even then I expect I could only make a guess. You see, a hallucination isn't the disease, only a symptom. It may be due to all sorts of troubles—troubles in the sense organs, troubles in the brain, troubles in the mind that you can't refer to anything bodily. The cure depends upon the cause; and even when you know the cause you can't be sure of the cure. Take the simplest case, brain injury. You may be able to stop the trouble by operation; but it depends on whether you can remedy the damage, or get at it without injuring the rest of the brain too much. Her case appears

to be due to purely mental causes. We should have to cure her by mental surgery; suggestion or shock, for example. The difficulty is much the same. You don't know how the rest of her mind will stand when you've cut out the hallucination. I must see her often, and talk to her, and watch her. I'll do my best."

They went to The Laurels, where Angelica lived with her father and mother, on the following afternoon. She sat with them in the garden, nursing her "baby" till Doctor Tom said that she must put it down and play croquet. She called him a "despot"; but she sent a servant for pillows and a rug, and made a bed on a bench. Doctor Tom held the doll while she did so, and when he was handing it back she looked at him reproachfully.

"You haven't taken any notice of her," she accused him; and Doctor Tom lifted the veil, and put his lips to the wax face before he relinquished the doll.

"Now come and talk to us, Angel," he said. "I want to show you off."

So Angelica took them round the garden, talking brightly. She was a very rational woman, Doctor Jack decided, so far as she was rational. He wondered whether the rational side of her had any suspicion of the irrational side, and resolved to find out. He held that sanity and insanity seldom existed in the same brain without a life-and-death struggle; in other words, that Angelica must end by becoming wholly insane or wholly sane.

Presently Angelica's mother came out, and the four of them played croquet. Angelica was Doctor Tom's partner.

"I always am," she explained to Doctor Jack. "You see, he lets me talk about baby, and the others won't, except mother, and it worries her. Sometimes it makes her cry. I think something dreadful happened to a baby of hers; a girl baby. It is one of the things that I don't remember."

"What are they?" Doctor Jack asked.

He knew that such patients usually have a secret suspicion of their own

delusions, and that the way to a cure, when cure is possible, lies there.

"Why, how can I know what I don't know?" she asked, with a smile. "Sometimes I don't seem to remember anything but baby; and the doctor, of course. There are some things that you *can't* forget."

And whenever he tried to lead her to the things which she had forgotten, she always came back to those which she remembered; and they were "Rosemary" and Doctor Tom. It seemed to Doctor Jack that the struggle must be fought out between the two.

The next morning they met her in the village. Mother had promised to look after Rosemary, she explained. "And, really, I think it is good for 'mum.' You men don't understand how women love a baby!"

"Don't I, Angelica?" Doctor Tom asked.

"Oh, you!" cried Angelica. "You understand everything! Even me!"

"But he *doesn't* understand me quite," she confided to Doctor Jack when they were waiting for him outside a patient's house. "He thinks I am only a big child."

She flushed, and looked at her shoes; and Doctor Jack frowned slowly. He was quite sure that half of Angelica was in love with Doctor Tom; but he was not sure which half—the rational or the irrational. He walked up and down the garden all that afternoon thinking over the problem.

"I'm not sure that we couldn't wean her from the 'baby,'" he told his uncle after dinner. "There's a sort of competition in her mind between the 'baby' and *you!* If she fell in love with you— Have you thought of it?"

"Thought of it!" Doctor Tom cried. "Thought of it!"

"Of course"—Doctor Jack lit a cigar slowly—"you can't marry her unless she's cured. And if it didn't cure her— No, it's too big a risk. Well, there's another way."

The two men faced each other for a long while.

"What way?" Doctor Tom asked.

"Well," said Doctor Jack, "it's kill

or cure. You understand. And if it's cure, you may find that it was her irrational self that was in love with you; the Angelica that would be gone if we got rid of the hallucination in the way that I thought of."

"What way?" Doctor Tom asked again.

"By making her contrast the doll with a real baby; with my little May, for example. We could change them when she's asleep. People who have hallucinations are generally conscious of a difference between them and reality, though they won't own it. Let her wake up with a real child in her arms and she will be shaken in her delusion; and if we strike while the iron's hot and tell her— Mind you, it's a big risk. Personally, I believe that it would succeed so far as curing the hallucination is concerned; but whether she'd collapse afterward, or have another attack of brain fever, I can't guess. Still, she's a healthy woman, with plenty of vitality. She ought to pull through."

Doctor Tom considered for a few seconds.

"I'll do it," he decided. "She'll probably hate me ever after, whether I succeed or fail; but she's entitled to her chance of a sound life—my pretty little Angelica."

"No," Doctor Jack contradicted. "You mustn't do it. She mustn't hate you. If you can keep your hold over her—if the rational Angelica loves you—that will pull her together afterward. Her hold on life is through two people; the 'baby' will be gone; and if you can't hold her— Frankly, I doubt if you can, dear old chap. She will be a very different person; a woman, not a child. It is the child that loves you, I am afraid. You'll have to risk that."

"You can leave me out of the question," Doctor Tom asserted. "If I can make her whole, even to love and marry some one else, I'll do it."

"If her people will consent," Doctor Jack qualified.

But Doctor Tom's face set.

"I'll make them consent," he declared.

"They realize how you feel about her, I suppose?"

"Yes," Doctor Tom stated. "Yes. They will do what I advise."

They went to Angelica's house the next afternoon, and found her sitting on the floor building up bricks for the "baby."

"She's been laughing so," she declared. "You've seen her laugh, haven't you, Doctor Tom?"

"Seen her laugh!" cried Doctor Tom. "Why, she always laughs when I see her. You know your stern old godfather, don't you, witch?" He danced the doll on his knee. "My second best baby!" he called it.

"He means that I am his other baby," Angelica explained. "I am, of course. That is why I do not worry about the things that puzzle me. He understands."

She stood behind Doctor Tom's chair, and leaned over him and patted the "baby's" cheek.

"We know how good he is," she said; "don't we, baby? There are only the three of us. At least—I mean the three that I *always* remember."

"Only the three of us," Doctor Tom agreed, with a twitch of his bushy eyebrows; "and I am going to take one of us to see its grandmother, while you stop and talk to Jack. Say good-by to mummy, baby."

He held the doll out to Angelica, and she kissed it. Her eyes followed them to the door, and she was silent for a few minutes. Then she looked hard at Doctor Jack.

"I think he likes me best," she remarked, as if she wished her opinion confirmed.

Doctor Jack leaned forward, with his eyes fixed upon her.

"He likes you better than every one and everything," he said. "Do you know why he doesn't tell you so?"

Angelica's lips quivered, and she brushed her eyes.

"Perhaps he thinks I am only a child," she suggested. "But—but I kept house quite well when mother was away, and—but you don't think it is that."

"Neither do you, Miss Angelica," Doctor Jack said gravely.

He still fixed her with his eyes; and she lowered hers.

"No. I think it is because—because of what I do not remember," she said faintly.

"Yes," Doctor Jack nodded. "I think it is that."

She played with an antimacassar.

"He would tell me if he thought it was good for me to understand," she said.

"But you do understand a little," Doctor Jack insisted. "Come, come! Don't cry. You do, don't you?"

"I don't understand," she sobbed. "I only know that there is something—something that I don't understand. Tell him to tell me."

"He might not be able to make you understand," Doctor Jack explained. "And if you did you might not be so fond of him. You see, it is the Angelica who does not remember who is so fond of him."

"Oh, no!" Angelica cried swiftly. "It is *all* of me. That is where he is different from baby. Sometimes she—she—" The girl passed her hands over her eyes, and shivered. "Oh, Doctor John! I want to know, but I am so afraid. What is the matter with— with Rosemary? Why don't other people love her as I do? Why is she different from other babies? She is. I know she is!" The tears streamed down her face. "What is it?" she cried wildly. "Can't you tell me?"

"No," said Doctor Jack very gravely. "I cannot tell you, Miss Angelica. You must find out for yourself. But I am going to help you. I can't say when or how; but I will. If it hurts you, you must ask Doctor Tom for comfort."

"There will be no need to ask," said Angelica proudly. "He will not wait for that. Hush! Here he comes. Don't let him know that I am going to be hurt. It would worry him so. Was she good with you, doctor?"

"Of course!" he said. "She always is."

Angelica put her arm through his, and leaned a little against him.

"And so am I!" she said. "The me that remembers, and the me that

doesn't. You are to bring your violin this evening, and we will have a *smiling* time!"

"You have been talking to her," Doctor Tom suggested on the way home.

"Yes. I've been trying, in a guarded way, to put her mind on the alert. As I suspected, she realizes that her 'baby' is not quite like other babies; and she wants to find out, because—her obsessed self is very much in love with you."

"She said both selfs; at least, if that was what she meant."

"It was what she meant; but she doesn't understand herself. The two selfs are mixed up at present, and she doesn't know which is which. Neither do I. The real Angelica is an unknown quantity, I warn you. You'd better think over it before you decide."

"I have arranged it with her mother," Doctor Tom said firmly. "It is to be to-night."

"So soon!" Doctor Jack frowned thoughtfully. "Well, perhaps it is best."

They went to The Laurels after dinner, and took baby May in a cab, and smuggled her in the back door. She slept all the way, and all the evening; "the smiling evening," as Angelica had called it. When Doctor Tom reckons up the dark times of his life, he puts that smiling evening first.

Angelica herself was a vision of smiles, and youth, and beauty. She had dressed, as if it were a special occasion, in filmy muslin, with red roses at her breast and in her hair. There were pale-pink roses on her cheeks, and her eyes were large and wonderful. She talked delightfully, and played and sang as even Doctor Tom had rarely heard her. It was obvious to all that she talked, and played, and sang for *him*. When the doctors pretended to be going, she walked to the gate with them; and, while Doctor Jack was speaking to her father, she slipped her arm through Doctor Tom's.

"I feel as if something was going to happen," she whispered. "And if it did, I should like you to know, and to know that I knew—what we must not speak

about, because—because I do not understand some things.”

Doctor Tom did not speak, but drew her to him, and kissed her for the first time in their lives; and the second—third—fourth.

“Good night, Angelica,” he said softly. “God bless you.”

“Good night, dear,” she answered. “God bless *you*.”

“Her smiling evening,” he muttered as he walked along the road with his nephew. “Her smiling evening!”

He stood still, and blew his nose violently; and Doctor Jack walked on ahead, humming carelessly, as if he noticed nothing.

Angelica’s father let them in quietly an hour later. She had gone to bed, he stated, and she seemed very well and happy. Her mother and her old nurse were waiting to change the babies when she was fast asleep. The three men sat for an hour smoking and talking, with a brave show of interest, about politics. None of them said anything illuminating; but that conversation is branded on their three minds for the rest of their lives.

It was two o’clock when Angelica’s mother stole in. Her cap had fallen off, and her gray hair was disordered.

“We are going to take it away,” she told them, “and put May in her arms instead. She seems different to-night. She hardly looked at it; but she is holding it in her sleep. She has taken your photograph from her dressing table and put it on the table beside her, Tom, dear boy!” She put her hand on his head for a moment. “God help my baby, and you!”

“Amen!” said the three men; and Doctor Jack rose and went upstairs with her.

She and the nurse were to sit in Angelica’s room till she woke; and Doctor Jack was to wait in the dressing room. It was better, he insisted, that he should be the one to tell Angelica the truth, because she was likely to hate the teller, as we hate the surgical instruments that have cured us; and it would not matter so vitally to him.

Doctor Tom and her father listened

at the foot of the stairs till the movements above had ceased. Then they went, and sat one each side of the dining-room table, with the door ajar. They said nothing till the early summer dawn began. Then Angelica’s father rose, and turned down the gas, and pulled up the blinds, and looked out upon the gray, half-lit garden. It was a dull morning, and a soft, fine rain was falling. They could hear it upon the leaves. The sparrows were twittering. A church clock struck four.

“It was a morning like this,” he said, “when Angel was born. She was a golden-haired little thing; and she always had a smile.”

Doctor Tom nodded and drew a deep breath. Her father’s eyes blinked as he stared at the familiar garden that looked so unfamiliar in the half light. He fancied that he saw a fair-haired, laughing child toddling round the deserted paths.

“She used to pull up my geraniums,” he remarked when half an hour had passed and the gray world had changed to green.

When it was full daylight, and the rain had ceased and the clouds were breaking, he sat down again.

“We should be glad to trust our little girl to you, Melstone,” he said, “if she got well.”

Doctor Melstone looked up. His face was haggard.

“She would be changed,” he said. “She mightn’t want to— Jack says she will be a different Angelica.”

“If she is changed in that,” said her father, “she won’t be Angelica at all. Her mother and I were noticing her to-night. Melstone, we’d be ready to go to-morrow if we could see the child in your care.”

“She will be in my care, anyhow— anyhow.”

They sat in silence for another hour. The clouds crumbled away, and the sun came out. A slanting ray of sunlight entered the window. They watched it creep across the carpet. It had almost reached Doctor Tom’s foot, when they heard a piercing cry from Angelica, and

a frightened scream from baby May, and then sobbing entreaties from Angelica's mother.

They reached the foot of the stairs as the nurse passed the top carrying baby May, and soothing her. They could hear Angelica talking frenziedly, and her mother pleading with her. Then they heard Doctor Jack's deep voice; and presently all voices ceased but his; till at last Angelica asked him a hurried question—they could not catch the words—and he answered.

There was a short silence after the answer. Angelica's mother broke it with a terrible cry; and they ran up the stairs.

The nurse stopped them at the bedroom door.

"You must not come in," she insisted. "You must leave her to us. She has fainted. That is all."

She went back into the room. After a time she came out again.

"She has come to and fainted again," she informed them.

Twice afterward she came out and told them the same thing.

"But you mustn't go in," she persisted. "Doctor John says she will never forgive you if she connects you with the loss of her baby. Yes, she understands. The delusion has gone. There is no doubt of that."

It was a long while before the nurse appeared again. She was crying uncontrolledly, and she did not speak, but beckoned them in. Angelica's mother was on her knees. Doctor Jack was

listening to Angelica's heart. He glanced at them with a white face.

"She's coming to," he said; "but if she goes off again——"

Doctor Tom pulled a chair to the bed and took Angelica's pretty white hands, and held them close to him. Her lips moved slightly and her eyelids trembled, but they did not open. She breathed in faint, shivering gasps.

"Angelica!" cried Doctor Tom. "Angelica!"

She did not seem to hear him. Her lips kept moving, and at last the sounds came.

"There—isn't—any—baby," she declared, in a feeble whisper. "No—little—baby. Gone! Gone!"

Her eyes opened, but there seemed no light in them.

"Angelica!" Doctor Tom cried. "My little Angel!"

He bent down and kissed her; and the light seemed to spring into her eyes. She clutched at his hands, and touched them all over; felt his wrists; gasped quickly, and stared.

"Yes, dear, yes!" he cried. "I am real. I have not gone. I never shall go from you, Angel. I love you, dear."

The white face smiled slowly, and the listless fingers pulled feebly at his hands. He bent down, and put his strong arm round her; and her shaking arm stole slowly round his neck.

"The new Angelica loves you," she said; "but the Angelica who has gone loved you, too." She kissed him gently. "That's for remembrance!"





PLAYS AND PLAYERS

A FIRST NIGHTER

"Excuse Me" a train full of laughs with Willis Sweatnam as chief promoter of the exercise. The stage runs to pictures in "Everywoman" and "The Arrow Maker," the former a modern morality play, lavish in spectacle but somewhat disappointing as drama. Passing of The New Theater in Central Park West. Some plays that failed. "The Seven Sisters" chiefly distinguished by Laurette Taylor's charming acting.

THE Overland Limited—departing at ten-thirty for San Francisco, Reno, and way stations. Enter the porter, suave, complacent, underneath his load of bags and baggage, golf sticks, and sundry accompaniments of travel. Enter with him *Mr. Harold Wedgewood*, English tourist, very fussy, supercilious, and dictatorial, with orders to the porter for his "tub," and slippers, and various immediate commissions, suggesting that the ebon functionary of the railroad is his own private servant whom no one else will call on.

Enter now the occupants of the state-room, variously divorced and remarried, until now their exact status is purely a matter of geography. In Illinois they would be man and wife; in Missouri bigamists; in Nebraska he would still be unmarried, and she the wife of her second husband; in Utah the laws are in their favor; in Nevada, when they finally reach that State, they may get things untangled. In the meantime, however, the porter must be wary—he, the husband, must be called at two-fifteen a. m., when the train crosses the Mississippi, for in Iowa neither of them

would be married—according to the prevailing law.

It is on premises such as these, with a delightfully satirical underlining, that Mr. Rupert Hughes has based his farce, "Excuse Me," produced at the Gaiety Theater, where it promises to enjoy prosperity for several months to come.

Though the idea of making the scene of a play the interior of a train of railroad cars may not be entirely new, it has seldom been handled with as good effect or so much ingenuity. A play, in the sense of a work having a coherent plot, it is really not at all. But the series of incidents of which it is made up, expressed through the sayings and doings of the several groups of related and unrelated characters, provide just the sort of entertainment the average person wants. In the words of the German comedian: "Excuse Me" is to laugh."

The first act is largely devoted to the arrival of the various passengers, and their bestowal by the porter, played with delightful ease and unction by Mr. Willis Sweatnam, upon whom throughout there is chief dependence for real and generous fun.

Come now a pleasant spinster and a

grouchy bachelor, then a series of would-be divorcees, and, ultimately, the Reverend Mr. Walter Temple and his wife, on their first vacation trip in twenty years, and prepared to make the most of it, she by flirting with all eligibles, and he by disguising his real calling, a purpose effected by turning his clerical collar backside forward and the substitution of a dashing red tie for the one of modest, proper black. And now arrives Mr. Jimmy Wellington, of Chicago, very fat, very drunk, and very sad. His wife has forsaken him, and he is broken-hearted, so he declares to all who will listen to him. Then come two young lieutenants prepared to decorate the section engaged by a brother officer, shortly to appear, they think, with his blushing bride. The pair at this moment are supposed to be having the knot tied by a justice of the peace. Shortly afterward, they arrive, but in dejection. Their taxi had broken down, and they were obliged to hot-foot it to the train without having become one another's. He cannot delay, because this is the last train that will bring him to the transport in time for sailing. So it looks as if two loving hearts are to be severed before they reach the marriage altar.

But time-tables and trains wait for no man. While they are saying their farewells, the train has started, and no stops for many hundred miles. Much argument as to whether they shall pretend to be just friends or a newly married couple with familiar complications as a consequence. And in the meantime a hunt through the train for a clergyman, not to be found since the Reverend Mr. Temple has disguised his calling to further holiday expectations.

By the morning of the fourth day matters have so far progressed that the latter is regarded with suspicion as a card sharp; the bachelor and spinster are ready to enter into matrimony; the young about-to-be-married army officer and his love are almost at daggers drawn; and the various and varying occupants of the coaches are either hating bitterly or loving tenderly those who had previously meant little or nothing in their scheme of life.

Then an attack by highwaymen, with brave action on the part of the young army officer, and recognition of the service from all the passengers and, most of all, his darling little fiancée. Ultimately Reno, with its promise of divorce for those who want it still, several having previously had a decided change of heart.

Of the players Mr. Willis Sweatnam, as has been said, is the one most persistently and legitimately amusing, but there are other clever people in the cast, including James Lackaye, John Westley, John Findlay, Anne Murdock, Lot-tie Alter, and Grace Fisher. What they are called upon to do is to sketch quickly salient attributes in the figures, and to lend themselves freely to the hurly-burly of the action. And this they do commendably, if often with more of acrobatic than really histrionic skill.

In curious contrast to this play is "Everywoman," the so-called modern morality play, by Walter Browne, whose untimely death the very day the play was first produced gave the event a peculiar, grim interest somewhat extraordinary.

"Everywoman," wrote Mr. Browne in introduction to the play, "is intended to afford pleasure and entertainment to all classes of intelligent playgoers—hence the music, the songs, and choruses, the dances, the spectacular and scenic effects, and the realism of everyday life. It is not a sermon in disguise, neither is it a quixotic effort to elevate the stage. At the same time, it is hoped that the play may be found to contain some clean and wholesome moral lessons."

The story begins in *Everywoman's* home at the hour when awakening womanhood enkindles yearnings and desires. With her companions—*Youth*, *Beauty*, and *Modesty*—*Everywoman* goes out into the world to learn the meaning of life. The inspiration for her quest of *Love* is the voice of *Flattery*, who makes his home in *Everywoman's* mirror. In the second act *Everywoman* has found her way to the stage of a city playhouse. It is rehearsal time, revealing theatrical man-

agers, chorus girls, "play actors," and *Wealth* and *Witless*, dangerous companions for *Modesty* and *Beauty*. Here *Everywoman* is temporarily led astray, having mistaken *Passion*, a play actor, for *Love*. By this error she loses the companionship of *Modesty*. The quest for *Love* is transferred in the third act to the luxurious apartment of *Everywoman*, who is hostess at an elaborate banquet.

Wealth, like *Passion*, poses as *King Love*, and comes to *Everywoman* bearing gifts. But *Everywoman* tears the mask from this pretender, as she had previously uncovered the lecherous face of *Passion*, and he is dismissed with scorn. Then *Everywoman* turns to her two companions, *Youth* and *Beauty*, and her handmaiden, *Conscience*. But she finds that *Beauty* has died. And a glance at her mirror now reveals to *Everywoman* not the splendor of subtle *Flattery*, but the countenance of despoised *Truth*.

In the fourth act, *Everywoman*, deserted, wanders wearily up the "gay white way." About her shoulders she draws a shawl of black, while *Youth*, illy clad, falters behind. It is New Year's eve, and the two disconsolate figures stand before a gilded café, from which comes the sound of revelry and dissipation, for *Wealth* is entertaining. *Everywoman*, in deep distress, awaits the coming of *Wealth*, who had deserted her at the grave of *Beauty*. *Youth* shudderingly pleads: "No, no! 'Twas *Wealth* caused all our woe." But *Everywoman* is obdurate, and when *Youth's* admonitions become more insistent the weak companion is surrendered to the call boy *Time*, who leads her to her death. Finally *Wealth* appears, accompanied by a retinue of parasites, among whom is *Passion*. *Everywoman* approaches, and is spurned, while the former suitor goes gayly off with his arms encircling *Vice*, "an artful minx, whose cheeks are plump and pink, whose eyes flash tempting flame, whose form alluring is." The throng of bon vivants melts quickly away.

Everywoman is alone. Overcome with remorse for her dead *Beauty* and

Youth, and for *Modesty*, who has fled, she sinks to her knees at the door of a church, pleading for help. And there comes the solemn chant for the dead, but mingled with it are the chimes of the year new-born, the note of hope and of regeneration, the awakening of a new soul in *Everywoman*. The wanderer, preceded by *Truth* and followed by *Nobody*, abandons her quest of *Love*, and departs for home.

In the fifth act, *Everywoman*, led by the steady rays of *Truth's* lamp, returns to find at her fireside the stalwart youth, *King Love the First*, son of *Truth*, who has kept warm the embers on *Everywoman's* hearthstone through all the weary days of her wandering.

"Art thou indeed a king?" asks *Everywoman*. "Where is thy throne?" "Within thy heart, O *Everywoman*!" is *Love's* reply. "Where is thy kingdom?" "In *Everywoman's* home." "Where is thy crown?" "At thy feet." "Why, this is but a garland of briars and roses!" wonderingly answers *Everywoman*, to which *Love* responds: "Wilt share a crown in which joy overshadows sorrow, but sorrow hides unseen, yet oftentimes not unfelt? Such the only crown, *Love*, born of *Truth*, can offer."

And as the two pledge everlasting faith, there rises from the wings the specter *Nobody*, a figure who stalks through the drama as an omen and an ideal. His hand is raised in benediction.

It is the type of thing which genius of the highest order could alone make wholly satisfying. But though it is produced at the Herald Square very sumptuously and lavishly, and with no end of scenic richness and elaborateness of costume and of music, much remains to be desired.

It is, in fact, one of those entertainments which one can scarcely classify, neither drama nor extravaganza entirely, yet much more the latter than the former, and somewhat serious in purpose for that type of entertainment. Miss Laura Nelson Hall, an able player, is cast as *Everywoman*, and is picturesque to look at, while succeeding moderately well with the text. In her

case, as in that of most of the players, unfamiliarity with poetic reading is a deterrent to the best effect.

Miss Patricia Collins, Miss Aurora Platt, Miss Wilda Bennett, and Miss Juliet Day bring much feminine beauty to the scene, while Mrs. Sarah Cowell LeMoyné, Edward Mackey, and Frederick De Belleville, and H. Cooper Cliffe are well-seasoned players in other prominent rôles.

Pictorial again rather than dramatic, and a distinct disappointment to those who have been hoping that the real drama of the American Indian might materialize, was "The Arrow Maker," by Mrs. Mary Austin, produced after much preliminary puffery at the New Theater. For those who still enjoy scenery, there was plenty to appeal. The rocky walls of the cañon, in the first act, rose to apparently enormous heights. The second act, showing the village on a narrow shelf, overlooking a stretch of desert, gave the effect of illimitable distance, and the third had the oppressiveness of crowding and o'ertopping mountains. So, too, in the costumes and dances and ceremonials there was abundant color, but the main story was trivial and of no particular significance, and the acting was in no sense illuminative of racial peculiarities.

In the first act, set in the bottom of a deep cañon, was shown the hut of the *Chisera*, or medicine woman, set apart from the tribe in order that she might be nearer the gods. The fighting men and the women bring her gifts to ask her aid in a coming conflict with a neighboring tribe, and she is told to prepare medicine to decide the election of a new war lord to take the place of the half-blind chief. The *Chisera* has loved *Simwa*, the arrow maker, and has given him all of the benefits of her knowledge. When the time of the election comes, she announces that the gods have decided in *Simwa's* favor. She has not been told that *Simwa* has been selected as the husband of *Bright Water*, the daughter of the chief.

The second act shows the campody, or village, of the tribe on *Simwa's* wedding day. During the festivities, when

the older men are already fearing an attack from a rival tribe, the *Chisera* arrives uninvited, warned by *Great Hawk*, a fighting man, of the arrow maker's perfidy. She denounces him as an ingrate, who owes all of his success to her, and when he denies their relationship, she threatens to prove it by removing from the tribe the blessings her medicines have given.

In the last act the tribe has been decimated by famine and battle. The people are hiding in caves, and the *Chisera* is continually refusing to exercise her powers, which she knows went from her at the same time as her love for *Simwa* departed. The fighting men return vanquished, and they depose *Simwa*, and elect *Great Hawk* in his stead. The women plead with the medicine woman, bringing their starving children to her, until she realizes that her greatest love is for the tribe. She tries again to make her medicine, and this time succeeds. A medicine arrow that she has given to *Simwa*, and that he has tried to use against her, she shoots into the distance against the enemies of her tribe, and the curtain falls.

With this production the New Theater, as it has existed in the magnificent but too extensive structure in Central Park West, practically passes out of existence. There is promise that the ideal of the founders will be maintained in other and more suitable quarters, and under more promising conditions. It has been an expensive experiment—some half million of dollars having been lost in less than two seasons—but the most pathetic feature of the case is the fact that it will create distrust of all similar efforts at creating an intelligent theater. Which is unfortunate, since the mistakes of the management in this case might easily have been foreseen—were foreseen, in fact—and might readily enough have been avoided by a more practical and modest directorate. An institution like this New Theater should have been started on a small scale and allowed to grow. And its failure merely goes to prove again that, though money may accomplish much, it is not always potent in matters affecting art.

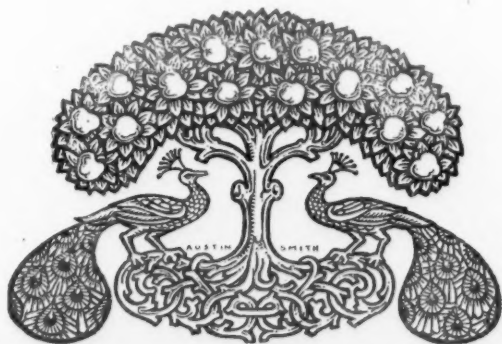
The record of the month includes the production of Mr. Walter Hackett's "Our World," produced at the Garrick Theater, where it lasted scarcely a week, and "The Zebra," an adapted French farce by Paul Potter, which followed at the same theater, but which did not tarry long enough to convey an impression of success. A better play, "Nobody's Daughter," seen at the New Theater, and transferred to Daly's, where it remained only a week or two, to be finally withdrawn from view, was the work of a Miss Symonds, an Englishwoman, writing under the name of George Paston. Besides excellent acting by Miss Helen Reimer, and Miss Olive Wyndham, and Mr. A. E. Anson, it served to introduce two charming players in the persons of Miss Pamela Gaythorne and Mrs. Teresa Maxwell-Conover.

A little more successful, though not nearly so much as it might have been made to appear by greater skill in staging and adaptation, was "The Seven Sisters," a farce made over by Edith Ellis from the Hungarian of Ferenc Herczegh. It was produced at the Lyceum.

A Hungarian widow has seven daughters, and—being a provident and resolute person—she ordains that they must be married in the order of their

birth. So only the oldest daughter is permitted to dress as an adult, while her sisters are doomed to short frocks and pigtails. Unfortunately the fourth daughter, *Mici*—a free-hearted, lovable, but hoydenish girl, who has been expelled from a convent for various riotous proceedings—arrives at home in the guise of a dashing young woman, in fashionable borrowed attire, and with a male attachment. The stern mother promptly shortens her skirts, and lets down her hair, and bids her abandon all hopes of a lover until her elder sisters have been disposed of. Thereupon the rebellious *Mici* enters into a conspiracy with the gay young bachelor, whom she has met at a masked ball, to provide her seniors with husbands at the earliest possible moment. The necessary husbands, of course, are found in double-quick time, and *Mici*, in her turn, secures the lover—a dashing, young count and professed celibate—for whom she has been angling all the time.

Mr. Charles Cherry, an excellent comedian and the star of the aggregation, was not in his best element in this farce, the chief honors going to Miss Laurette Taylor, whose freshness of manner and method and spirited good humor made her most appealing. The only regret was that her rôle was far too brief.





FOR BOOK LOVERS

VERY few novels are published nowadays more thoroughly American than Vaughan Kester's new book, "The Prodigal Judge," which has just been brought out by the Bobbs-Merrill Company. That the action of the plot takes place in the administration of President Jackson and that the scene is laid in the region between South Carolina and western Tennessee are two facts which help to make its Americanism inevitable.

The time and place selected by Mr. Kester have made it easier for him to create and mold his characters. Any one who has even a slight knowledge of the period would look for just such a character as Bob Yancey, the poor white, shiftless, but warm-hearted; Slocum Price, the prodigal judge, son of a Southern aristocrat, but now degraded and an outcast; Murrell, the reckless outlaw, and Fentress, his respectable partner.

These, with Betty Malroy, the young woman who owns a rich plantation near Memphis, are the principal characters of the book. The common interest, which brings these people together and forms the nucleus of the plot, is to be found in the personality of a small boy as to whose identity there is considerable mystery. In the absence of any other claimant to him, Bob Yancey undertakes to care for him and to retain possession of him when Murrell and Fentress threaten to kidnap him. Yancey starts off on a journey with him across the Tennessee Mountains to Miss Malroy's plantation. "Judge" Price comes into the story here, and is the central figure to the end.

The principal weakness of the story is in the characterization of Slocum Price, for one cannot but feel that Mr. Kester has not presented the prodigal judge quite as he has conceived him. But on the whole, aside from this, the work is well done, and the story has a cumulative interest which carries the reader through and holds his attention to the last chapter.



Stories involving so-called occult phenomena are as old, almost, as the art of story-telling. We all of us remember our "Arabian Nights" and our "Grimm's Fairy Tales," and our numerous ghost stories. The type to which all of these belong is still popular, and likely enough always will be, but recently they have been modified by the investigations of the scientific psychologists to such an extent as to make them seem like records of fact instead of fiction. Stories of double personality have been more or less common in the last three or four years, but nothing of the kind has been published having quite the significance of Mr. Robert Hichens' new book, "The Dweller on the Threshold," which the Century Company has just brought out.

The case of the Reverend Marcus Harding and his senior curate, Henry Chichester, is one of transferred personality rather than double personality. It is a grim kind of tale, made more so by the author's superb handling of his theme and characters. We assume that he has studied the subject in its bearing upon the plot, and so had demonstrated some of the dangers of trifling with the

powers of the mind which are very real, but at present hardly understood.

There is no evidence that Mr. Hichens intended to write a novel with a purpose or to teach a lesson, but no one can read it without seeing in it a warning against reckless or selfish experimenting with forces of which so little is known.

The gradual development of the mental states in Harding and Chichester which finally wrecked them both, up to the latter's intense description of his own sensations, is set forth with the consummate art of which Mr. Hichens has made himself the master. He has written one of his very best books.



A good murder mystery story belongs to a type that never goes begging, and therefore "The Vanity Box," by Alice Stuyvesant, published by Doubleday, Page & Co., will have to wait for success only long enough for novel readers to find out about it.

It is an English story, and begins placidly enough with an informal little luncheon at which Sir Ian Hereward and his wife are the guests of one of their neighbors. They announce their intention of walking home and leave Mrs. Forestier, apparently in good spirits. But Sir Ian arrives at his house alone, and not long afterward his wife is found in an old tower, dead from two bullet wounds.

The interest of the story, as a mystery story, begins with this discovery, and, of course, follows the familiar lines. There is the usual puzzle as to the methods, motives, and identity of the supposed murderer.

Circumstances implicate various people, including Sir Ian himself and his cousin, Ian Barr; and two women, Teresina Ricardo and Nora Verney, are likewise involved, not as suspects, but as supplying motives.

The story is well constructed and interesting. There is no very remarkable characterization or other features except that the development of the plot is straightforward and the movement of the story is carried forward smoothly

and without unnecessary complications. On the whole, it is a good one of its kind, and will make any one who cares to read it thoroughly satisfied.



Another of Robert W. Chambers' interludes has just been published by D. Appleton & Co. This one is called "The Adventure of a Modest Man." We call it an interlude because, like "The Green Mouse," "The Tracer of Lost Persons," "A Young Man in a Hurry," and "Some Ladies in Haste," it is a fantastic kind of book, obviously without serious purpose, and brought out in the intervals between the publication of his novels.

This book is not a novel, but very evidently a collection of short stories connected one with the other by a very slender, if rather ingeniously woven, thread.

A gentleman farmer of Long Island—Van Twiller is his name—is the peg on which these stories are hung. He is a rather foolish, elderly man with two fascinating daughters, and is forced into a trip to Paris by a man-of-the-world-friend who first persuades him to buy a pig and then makes him promise, if the pig is stolen, to go abroad.

He reaches Paris, of course, with his daughters, and there runs across an acquaintance, one Williams, who at proper intervals tells him the short stories which Mr. Chambers has recently written, palming them off on Van Twiller as his own. No fault can be found with the stories themselves, for they are pretty good ones, even if most of them seem like old friends.

Van Twiller admits that he has been a denizen of the "Quarter" in his younger days, and, if he is to be believed, was a participant in some of the gayeties of that region. He is now at an age, however, when reminiscences of that sort may be taken with a certain degree of skepticism.



Now and then it is a great comfort to a busy man who does not feel that he can take a vacation to get hold of a

book that tells all about the good fortune of some one else who can. It is especially comforting if the book happens to be written by a man—or woman—who has enjoyed his recreation so thoroughly as to make the reader's share in it real and vital.

Such a book is "The Trail of a Tenderfoot," by Stephen Chalmers, published by the Outing Company. Mr. Chalmers is evidently a genuine sportsman, in the true sense of the word. Whether he is hunting deer in the Adirondacks, stalking seals in the Bay of Fundy, deep-sea fishing for pollock off Nova Scotia, or catching tarpon in the West Indies, he makes you feel that the hunting and fishing are secondary objects.

From his beginnings as a novice up to the time—and afterward—when experience has made him an "ex-tenderfoot," you realize all the fascination of life in the open air, in contrast with the cabined, cribbed, and confined existence of most of us in the cities.

You may not perhaps smell the perfume of the forest or the salt of the sea when you read Mr. Chalmers' book, but you will get, for an hour or two, a consciousness of freedom from care and fret and annoyance, and a sight, in your mind's eye, of the blue of the ocean and the green of the woods.



Harold Bindloss has just published through Frederick A. Stokes Company another story of the Canadian Northwest called "Sydney Carteret, Rancher."

As a story, it is quite equal to the author's previous tales of the same region, and is of much the same character. Mr. Bindloss has, apparently, appropriated British Columbia and made it his own, so far as fiction is concerned, to the extent, at least, of writing the best stories about it.

Sydney Carteret is a young Englishman, who, like some of the other heroes of Mr. Bindloss' tales, has never been of much practical use at home. He has been sent by his brother, a well-to-

do banker, to British Columbia to make a match with Clare Carteret, the daughter of a distant relative, a man of means living near Vancouver. The young man is a very decent sort of chap whose distaste for the purpose of his mission leads him to take advantage of an accident which comes simultaneously with the news of the ruin of his brother's bank and the latter's disgrace. He permits it to be supposed that he has been killed in the accident, and subsequently obtains work on his relative's ranch, where he is brought into almost daily contact with Clare.

The rest of the story may well be left to the reader to follow in the book itself; we think he will be repaid for the time spent upon it.

Like the other stories of Mr. Bindloss, this one is, so far as we can judge, a faithful reproduction of the atmosphere of the region, as well as of the characters, the manner in which they live, and their occupations. It is, in fact, all that a good novel should be.



Important New Books.

"The Dweller on the Threshold," Robert Hichens, Century Co.

"The Patchwork Papers," E. Temple Thurston, Dodd, Mead & Co.

"The Phantom of the Opera," Gaston Leroux, Bobbs-Merrill Co.

"The Prodigal Judge," Vaughan Kester, Bobbs-Merrill Co.

"The End of a Song," Jeannette Marks, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

"The Camera Fiend," E. W. Hornung, Charles Scribner's Sons.

"A Captain of Raleighs," Theodore Roberts, L. C. Page & Co.

"A Prince of Romance," Stephen Chalmers, Small, Maynard & Co.

"More Than Kin," Patricia Wentworth, G. P. Putnam's Sons.

"Robinetta," Kate Douglas Wiggin, Mary and Jane Findlater, and Allan McAulay, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

"Robert Kimberley," Frank H. Spearman, Charles Scribner's Sons.

"The Catpaw," William Hamilton Osborne, Dodd, Mead & Co.

"The Patrician," John Galsworthy, Charles Scribner's Sons.

"The New Nationalism," Theodore Roosevelt, Baker & Taylor Co.

"What's-His-Name," George Barr McCutcheon, Dodd, Mead & Co.

Talks With Ainslee's Readers

DOES it ever occur to you people who buy and read magazines to stop and think how much you have to do with the making of them? Do you realize, when you come right down to it, that, as a matter of fact, you are the ones who actually do make them what they are? In the long run you get what you want, for you set the pace, you establish the standards, you make your tastes known in one way or another, and the other people, the publishers and authors and editors, are the ones who do the hustling to keep up with you. Occasionally you reserve the manifestation of your judgment for a long time. You kept Bernard Shaw, for instance, waiting for twenty years before letting him know that you liked him. Or perhaps it might be more accurate to say that his English readers kept him on the anxious seat, and that you Americans recognized him promptly, as soon as you had a chance after Arnold Daly's production of "Candida." Your English cousins are more dilatory than you are, a good deal. It is not an uncommon thing for them to withhold their appreciation of an author's work for years while he goes on publishing from eight to a dozen novels, and even then he gets his first recognition from you. You, on the other hand, have shown yourselves as prompt in this matter as in everything else. Winston Churchill, Booth Tarkington, and Robert W. Chambers can testify that you never kept them waiting long to let them know what you thought of them. William De Morgan and Florence Barclay must have been surprised as well as pleased at the way you received them with their very first books.

All this is merely by way of leading up to the point we wish to make, which may be briefly summarized in the Biblical statement: "Neither is anything kept secret but that it shall come abroad."

Every one of you has doubtless heard one or more sad story of unappreciated genius. If all of the tales of this kind are true, there must be enough rejected masterpieces, still in manuscript, to fill the largest library in

the land. But we are willing to make the statement that there was never yet written a story that really deserved publication that did not sooner or later see the light of day in type; the idea that literary genius or even talent does not win recognition from those who make and read the magazines is the greatest mistake that could be made. It is as certain to make itself known as the sun is certain to rise to-morrow morning, and it is so because you, to whom we are talking, insist upon having it so.

If it were not true, indeed, if it were not actually a law of life, that real talent and good, honest work never failed of its reward, what kind of a world would this be to live in? What incentive would there be for any kind of effort? So when you hear a hard-luck tale about publishers refusing a great work of genius, or even a story that is a really good one, never believe it for a minute. They may make mistakes occasionally, just as you do, just as every one does, but if one or two or a dozen reject a good tale, as in the case of "David Harum," the thirteenth or fourteenth or fifteenth rises to the occasion and makes good.

AN incident happened not long ago that illustrates further the principle that nothing remains secret but that it shall come abroad; it has a certain flavor of romance about it.

In 1644 Velasquez, then the court painter of Philip IV, of Spain, painted a portrait of the king which was, and always has been, known as the "Fraga Portrait." The picture became a famous one among the best examples of the great painter's work. All students of art have known of it, and a copy of it has had a place in the Dulwich Gallery in England.

For many years, however, it has been supposed to be no longer in existence; experts have taken it for granted that it was destroyed or irretrievably lost. Recently it has come to light again. It was found hid-

den away in an ancient castle in Austria in the possession of the old ducal family of Parma, which had held it, apparently without knowledge of the fact, for generations. Presumably, it had been carelessly put aside by somebody who had no knowledge of its value, but no particulars of the manner in which the picture was discovered are given in the published accounts. It is perhaps enough to know that the "Fraga Portrait" has been found and restored to its place among the art treasures of the world.

NOW, you have seen something like this in AINSLEE'S. A good many of you have been readers of AINSLEE'S long enough to remember the discovery of O. Henry, for instance, and the rest of you know all about it from having read of it in our talks with you when we recently republished some of his early stories. Another instance of the same kind is the case of William J. Locke. We believe we are correct in saying that Mr. Locke made his first magazine appearance in America in the pages of AINSLEE'S about six years ago, before either "The Morals of Marcus Ordeyne" or "The Beloved Vagabond." Still another is Joseph C. Lincoln, who has been writing for this magazine for over eleven years, whose books are read now from one end of the country to another. And by the way, he has a complete novel in this issue. There are others, too, a long list of them.

AND in the meanwhile, it might be interesting for you and instructive to us if you would not only let us know of the stories you like in this number, but give us your opinion as to which of its contributors you believe are going to become famous. We ourselves have some ideas on the subject, and we want yours.

You have not hitherto shown any reluctance in writing to us since we began these talks with you. You have expressed yourselves quite freely about some of the stories in the March number, especially about Constance Skinner's complete novel, "A Man and His Mate," and Kate Jordan's "The Voice in the Silence."

One of these letters says:

"From a long row of magazines I have just selected an AINSLEE'S and looked it over.

"Your short stories are usually the best, but you have outdone yourself in obtaining 'The Voice in the Silence,' by Kate Jordan, which is unusually clever and distinctly different."

Another reader has this to say about Cornelia A. P. Comer's story, "The Preaching of Knud Erickson":

"To my way of thinking one of the best short stories I have ever read is 'The Preaching of Knud Erickson,' by Cornelia A. P. Comer. It is remarkable. I read it alone and wept over it; it seems so true and has such an air of conviction. There are some passages that hold a world of pathos, when he speaks of being so rich and yet having lost his child. 'Did I ask for riches an' no child? So what was left? The money and the heartache.' And where Ingeborg speaks of her husband's death: 'But I haf no Knud. My heart broke while he lived, an' now he iss gone. T'ings is always so. Nefer haf we it all.'"

"It is an exquisite, most uncommon little gem of a story."

This is the way you make the magazine, or at least one of the ways, and the most direct one, by telling us of the particular things that you like.

THE June number will give you plenty to write about. The complete novel will be a genuine mystery story, and a murder mystery at that; one of the type that works you up into a state of breathless suspense, and keeps your interest to the very end. Mrs. Belloc Lowndes is the author, and if you know anything about her work, you will be satisfied that the novel is by no means a mystery tale of the stereotyped kind. Margaretta Tuttle will have another of her stories of Mrs. Carson, "The Hour Between," and it is one of the best of the whole series. The Reverend Mr. Thorne and Mrs. Carson come to an understanding, and the result is a narrative of dramatic strength and pathos that cannot but make a deep impression upon you.

A domestic story full of human interest will be the contribution of Frank Condon in "Dropping Anchor." And two extremely good stories of the West will be "The Flight of Beatrice" and "Marooned on Tuscarora."

TEN



DAYS

The Art of Being Certain

The successful man doesn't guess—he knows because he takes the trouble to find out.

When he is a bit "out of fix" he says, "Something may be wrong with my food."

Then he proceeds to know by a ten days' trial—leaving off greasy meats, pastry, sticky and starchy half-cooked cereals, white bread and pastry, and adopting a plain, nourishing diet.

Many men who really know use the following breakfast: Some fruit, a saucer of Grape-Nuts and cream, soft-boiled eggs, some nice crisp toast, and a cup of Postum—nothing more.

The result is certain gain toward health.

"There's a Reason"

Get the famous little book, "The Road to Wellville," in packages of

Grape-Nuts

Canadian Postum Cereal Co., Ltd.
Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

Postum Cereal Company, Limited
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The fragrance of honeyed
apple blossoms in May
is not more alluring than
the goodness of

NABISCO

Sugar Wafers

— dessert confections
beyond compare.

Serve NABISCO as
you will—with ices or
beverages — they are
always welcome, always
appropriate.

In ten cent tins

Also in twenty-five cent tins

CHOCOLATE TOKENS —
Another delightful dessert
confection. Coated with
smooth, rich chocolate.

**NATIONAL
BISCUIT
COMPANY**

Vacation thoughts on heating

Don't have your vacation marred by the spectres of old-fashioned heating methods. Don't put it off longer, but settle *at once* and for all time this most important matter of home heating and hygiene. The savings in fuel, repairs, doctor bills, labor, etc., will pay for your annual vacation, and you will put balmy Summer warmth throughout the whole house on the most tempestuous of Winter days by using an outfit of



AMERICAN & IDEAL RADIATORS & BOILERS

By the use of IDEAL Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators the fuel bills grow smaller; uneven heating and repair bills disappear; ashes, soot and coal-gases are unknown in the living rooms; carpets, hangings and furniture are thereby given longer life; housework is reduced one-half, and the whole house is made a far better, happier, healthier place to live in.



A No. A-241 IDEAL Boiler and 461 sq. ft. of 38-in. AMERICAN Radiators, costing owner \$915, were used to heat this cottage. At these prices the goods can be bought of any reputable, competent fitter. This did not include cost of labor, pipe, valves, freight, etc., which are extra and vary according to climatic and other conditions.

AMERICAN Radiators are made in a multitude of sizes and forms—to go alongside open stairs; to fit into corners, curves and circles; between windows and under window seats; with brackets to hang upon the walls—off the floor; with special feet to prevent cutting carpet; with smoothest surfaces for decorating in any color or shade to match woodwork, wall coverings, furniture, etc.; thin radiators for narrow halls and bathrooms; with plate-warming ovens for dining-rooms; big radiators for storm vestibules; with high legs for cleaning thereunder; with ventilation bases so air of room may be changed 1 to 4 times per hour—and other splendid features which it would pay you big to know. Our free book tells all about them (and all about IDEAL Boilers). You will need it to choose the models from.

Be ready at the turn of a valve to flood the house with invigorating, genial warmth for the vacation-returning family. Prices in Spring usually rule the lowest of the year. In these less-hurried months you are sure to get the best workmanship. Put your property into right heating condition now, ready for best living, renting or selling. Don't wait until you build, but investigate *today* this big-paying building investment. Ask for free book—puts you under no obligation to buy.



Public Showrooms
in all large cities

AMERICAN RADIATOR COMPANY

Write to Dept. 39
Chicago



Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



Apply White Jap-a-lac Yourself and Have a Clean, Sweet, Pantry Shelf

Oilcloth *costs more* and quickly *wears out*. It *cracks* within a *few weeks* and after that grows *musty* and *smelly*. If you cover your shelves with *paper* you must *take it off* every time you *wash* them, and *then* you have to wait at least *half an hour* until the wood *dries* before you put back your *pots* and *pans*.

A little bit of time and a little bit of Jap-a-lac will give you a sanitary, wholesome kitchen. Stains can be removed, *smudges* of all sorts cleaned off of Jap-a-lac as *easily* as from a *china plate*. Jap-a-lac has a *gloss* just like the *glaze* of *porcelain*. It endures *forever*.

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Made in 18
different colors and natural (clear)
—renews everything from cellar to garret

"You can't keep house without it"

For hardwood floors; for restoring linoleum and oilcloth; for wainscoting rooms; for re-coating worn-out zinc or tin bath tubs; for brightening woodwork of all sorts; for coating pantry shelves and kitchen tables; for varnishing pictures (when thinned with turpentine) and gilding picture frames and radiators; for restoring go-carts and wagons; for decorating flower pots and jardiniere stands; for re-painting trunks; for enameling sinks; for restoring chairs, tables, iron beds, book cases and for a thousand and one uses, all of which are described and explained in a little book which you can have for a little request on a post card.

For sale everywhere—it wears forever. Look for the name of Glidden as well as the name Jap-a-lac. There is no substitute.

Cleveland, U.S.A. **The Glidden Varnish Co.** Toronto, Canada
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All sizes 20c. to \$3.00

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Do You Ask for



when buying hosiery?

"Onyx" Hosiery makes no glittering promises, resorts to no catch-penny methods, relies alone on the merit and honesty of its products. It would be rank folly to advertise any article without merit.

Merit wins success.

"ONYX" HOSIERY is a great success. Success invites imitation. Therefore ask for "Onyx" Hosiery, every pair of which is plainly stamped with the "Onyx" Brand for your protection.

A few of the good numbers are described below.

FOR WOMEN

B 488

Women's "ONYX" Gauze Silk Lisle in black and all colors, with "GARTER TOP" and Spliced Heel and Toe; very sheer; exceedingly strong.

25c per pair

910/7

Women's "ONYX" black, tan and white Gauze Lisle, with "DUB-L TOP" and "DOUBLEX" Heel and Toe; a very desirable quality.

35c per pair, or 3 pairs \$1

409 K

Women's "ONYX" "DUB-L TOP" Black, White and Tan Silk Lisle with "DOUBLEX" Splicing at Heel and Toe; feels and looks like silk; wears better.

50c per pair

409 G. The Gauze weight of this celebrated number with all its merits.

50c per pair

SILK HOSE FOR WOMEN

251

Women's "ONYX" Pure Thread Silk with Lisle Sole and Lisle "GARTER TOP"—Black and all colors—a wonderful value.

\$1.00 per pair

FOR MEN

B 153

Men's "ONYX" Silk Lisle, black and all colors; Gauze weight; Linnen Spliced Heel and Toe and Double Sole; a remarkable value.

25c per pair

E 325

Men's "ONYX" Black and Colored Silk Lisle, "DOUBLEX" splicing at Heel and Toe. "The Satisfactory Hose."

50c per pair

E 525. The Gauze weight of the above number.

50c per pair

215

Men's "ONYX" PURE THREAD SILK with Lisle Heel and Toe, in Black and the following colors: Tan, White, Gray, Navy, Purple, Helio, Suede, Green, Burgundy and Cadet. Best pure silk sock made at the price.

50c per pair

Sold at the quality shops. If your dealer cannot supply you, we will direct you to the nearest one or send postpaid any number desired. Write to Dept. Z.

Wholesale
Distributors

Lord & Taylor

NEW YORK

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"John, you certainly have a happy healthy family. You may well consider yourself fortunate. I never knew any woman to go through the ordeal so well as your wife did the last time. I think that Pabst Extract was just what her system needed."

Approaching motherhood—the period of woman's life when every moment is filled with joyful anticipations and much anxiety, demands the utmost of the expectant mother's health and strength. At no other time is proper nourishment so essential. In normal times, normal diet supplies sufficient nutriment, but when called upon to bear the double burden she needs additional nerve and tissue-building food. Build up mother's strength, quiet her nerves, prepare the way for happy, healthy motherhood by using

Pabst Extract

The "Best" Tonic

It supplies the very elements needed to nourish the growing child and build up the mother's vitality. It enriches the blood, calms the nerves, brings sweet, refreshing sleep and insures health, strength and vigor to both mother and child.

Pabst Extract is The "Best" Tonic to build up the overworked, strengthen the weak, overcome insomnia, relieve dyspepsia—to help the anaemic, the convales-

cent and the nervous wreck—to prepare for happy, healthy motherhood and give vigor to the aged. Your physician will recommend it.

Warning

Cheap imitations are sometimes substituted when Pabst Extract is called for. Be sure you get the genuine Pabst Extract. Refuse to accept a substitute. No "cheaper" extract can equal Pabst in purity, strength and quality.

\$1000 Reward

for evidence convicting anyone who, when Pabst Extract is called for, deliberately and without the knowledge of his customer, supplies an article other than Pabst Extract.

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**ORDER A DOZEN FROM YOUR DRUGGIST
INSIST UPON IT BEING "PABST"**

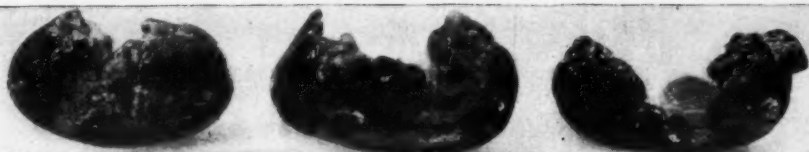
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Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



These are magnified photographs of beans—crisped, broken and worthless—from the top of a home baking dish.

This is one result of baking beans in dry heat.

It requires sixteen hours of soaking, boiling and baking to prepare a dish of home-baked beans.

And the top layer then is like these.

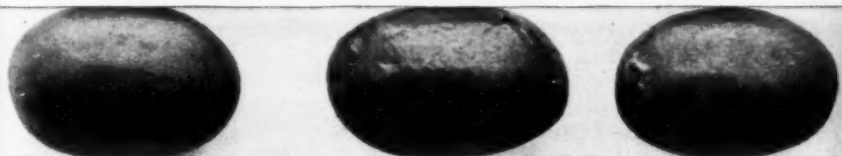


This is a magnified photograph of the beans farther down—soggy, broken, hard to digest.

These beans in the baking rarely get heated above 100 degrees.

And that isn't half enough heat.

As a result, instead of digesting, they ferment and form gas. Many people cannot eat them at all.



This is a magnified photograph of Van Camp's Beans—nut-like, mealy and whole. Every bean in every can is like the three we show.

Each separate bean, during all the baking, gets 245 degrees of heat. As a result, these

beans quickly digest. But we use steam ovens, and the beans come out in this ideal condition.

A million homes are serving Van Camp's, not from mere convenience. They like them better than the two kinds shown above. And so would you.

Van Camp's "The National Dish"
BAKED WITH TOMATO SAUCE
PORK AND BEANS "The National Dish"

Three sizes: 10, 15 and 20 cents per can

Van Camp Packing Co. Established 1861 **Indianapolis, Ind.**

(134)

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

The EVERETT PIANO

One of the three great
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REPRODUCED IN
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EXQUISITE PASTEL, BY THE CELEBRATED
ARTIST, PENRHYN STANLAWS, IS ONE OF
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Win Profit and Prestige

as Local Agent for New Printype Oliver Typewriter

—the Latest Wonder in Typewriterdom

On top of all the innovations that have given The Oliver Typewriter such amazing success and sales, we have placed the crowning improvement—PRINTYPE! The Oliver Typewriter now *typewrites print*.

To the first acceptable man in each locality where we have no local agent, we offer the *exclusive agency* for the Oliver Typewriter, which carries with it absolute control of all sales of Printype Oliver Typewriters in the territory assigned.

Think of the money-making possibilities of an agency which enables you to step into a man's office and say: "I represent the only typewriter in the world that successfully typewrites print!"

Overwhelming Public Demand for Printype

Printype, the beautiful new type face, unobtrusively introduced to the public by The Oliver Typewriter Company a year ago, is today the reigning favorite in Typewriterdom.

The beauty—the individuality—of Printype has turned the heads of some of the greatest business executives of the country.

Printype — OLIVER Typewriter

The Standard Visible Writer

If you have not had the pleasure of an introduction to Printype ask for a copy of our pamphlet—

"A Revolution in Typewriter Type"

Printype is an adaptation for the typewriter, of the regular book type universally used on printing presses.

An old friend in a captivating new dress—the last word in typewriter type-style. It is twice as artistic and easy to read as the old-style, sharp, thin outline letters and numerals used on all other typewriters.

Although The Printype Oliver Typewriter is worth a premium, we placed the complete machine on the market at the regular catalog price.

The effect was electrical. Inquiries came thick and fast. Demands for demonstrations kept our Local Agencies working at high tension. Sales jumped. Public appreciation of the innovation was so impressively shown in actual orders that today one-third of our total output of Oliver Typewriters are "Printypes."

Belongs Exclusively to the Oliver

The Oliver Typewriter Company originated "Printype." We control it. The Oliver Type-

Rush Agency Application

"The Opportunity Book," together with complete

Applications should be mailed promptly, as the territory is being assigned very rapidly. Interesting literature, including the "Printype Book" and information regarding Local Agency Plan, will be sent by first mail.

Address Agency Department

The Oliver Typewriter Company, 298 Oliver Typewriter Building, Chicago



writer is the only writing machine in the world that successfully *typewrites print*.

This triumph in typewriter type, added to the numerous other exclusive features of The Oliver Typewriter, greatly increases the value of our Local Agency Franchise. It puts our great Sales Organization still farther in the lead.

It's Your Supreme Opportunity

We distribute Oliver Typewriters through a world-wide Agency System. Each Local Agent is given exclusive control of all sales of New Oliver Typewriters in the territory assigned, during the entire life of the arrangement. The demand for demonstrations of The Printype Oliver Typewriter necessitates a heavy increase in our force of Local Agents.

Every city, every town, every village must be quickly assigned, so that the vast number of inquiries that are pouring into the General Offices may have prompt, personal attention. This is undoubtedly the greatest business opportunity of your life. Ask for the details of our Exclusive Agency Proposition. Get posted on the profit-possibilities. Remember that a Local Agency Contract is an exclusive Franchise that entitles you to all the profit on every sale made in the specified territory.

"17 Cents a Day" Booms Sales

As local agent for The Oliver Typewriter you can offer the liberal, attractive terms of "17 Cents a Day." You can accept any make of old machine your customer may own, to apply on the small first payment.

We do not surround our Local Agents with annoying rules and restrictions. In the territory assigned them, they are given full control. Loyal, efficient service wins generous recognition. Exceptional ability is rewarded by promotion to more important positions in the Oliver Organization.

Whether you can give your entire time to the work or only an hour or two a day, you cannot afford to miss this wonderful money-making opportunity.

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A marvelously reconstructed gem—the greatest triumph of the electric furnace. *Looks like a diamond—wears like a diamond—will cut glass—stands filing, fire and acid tests like a diamond—guaranteed to contain no glass.* Rémoh Gems have no paste, foil or artificial backing—their brilliancy is guaranteed forever. One thirtieth the cost of a diamond. These remarkable gems are set only in 14 Karat Solid Gold Mountings. Sent on approval—your money cheerfully refunded if not perfectly satisfactory. It will be well worth your while to get our De-Luxe Jewel Book—yours for the asking. Cut out and mail the coupon below—or write a postal. Address

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A Book of Bankers

This is a most remarkable book. It contains expressions from dozens of Presidents and Cashiers of National and State Banks, telling how they found health at

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Every section and state of the nation are represented, along with some foreign countries. It is unimpeachable evidence of a great success. If You Suffer write us. For over 35 years we have successfully relieved men and women of their most common afflictions those treacherous Rectal and Pelvic maladies including Rupture. The permanent results of our Special System of Treatment are attested by Judges, Ministers, Bankers and Farmers in our 900 page cloth bound book, sent postpaid for the asking. The book also contains much information about the Sanitarium its equipment and methods. Write today. If we cannot help you we tell you.

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Send to-day for the handsomest boat book ever printed. Illustrated in colors. Describes famous Mullins line in full. Mullins Steel Boats can't sink or warp—are puncture-proof—noiseless—**Twelve models, 16 to 26 ft., 3 to 30 horsepower.** Investigate amazing prices. Full line row boats and duck boats—\$22 to \$39. Get FREE book.

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"RICHMOND"
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Belvedere, Baltimore
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Essex, Boston
Furman, Boston
Thorndike, Boston
Stratfield, Bridgeport
Iroquois, Buffalo
Lenox, Buffalo
Lafayette, Buffalo
LaSalle, Chicago
Auditorium Annex, Chicago
Stratford, Chicago
Great Northern, Chicago
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Kaiserhof, Chicago
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Brevoort, Chicago
New Southern, Chicago
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**216 of the Leading
Hotels in America
Use "RICHMOND"
Vacuum Cleaning**

THE beauty of vacuum cleaning is that wherever installed, it *always pays for itself*.

It pays for itself, first, because it does away with the annual tear-up called *house-cleaning* (and house-cleaning costs more than you think unless you have figured it out).

It pays for itself, second, because it doubles and trebles the life of carpets, hangings, furniture, wallpaper, decorations; and keeps everything always *bright and new*.

In hotels, where house-cleaning is a *business*, brooms and dusters have long been discarded as *too expensive*.

In hotels, where *every operation* is figured down to the last penny of cost, "RICHMOND" Vacuum Cleaning has been almost universally adopted *because it pays*.

In residences, apartments, hotels, schools, office buildings, libraries, churches, theatres, factories, stores, garages, and public buildings, "RICHMOND" Vacuum Cleaning will easily earn its own way, to say nothing of the cleanliness and convenience it brings.

It can readily be installed in *old buildings* as well as in *new*. The initial expense is small; the annual saving is great. Write

THE McCrum-Howell Co.

Park Ave. and 41st St., New York City Rush and Michigan Sts., Chicago

MANUFACTURERS OF

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"RICHMOND"
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Denison, Indianapolis
Baltimore, Kansas City
Saver, Kansas City
Raddison, Minneapolis
Gayoso, Memphis
Peabody, Memphis
Plankinton, Milwaukee
Schlitz, Milwaukee
St. Charles, Milwaukee
Cawthon, Mobile
Bienville, Mobile
Paxton, Omaha
Bellevue-Stratford, Philadelphia
Schenley, Pittsburgh
Colonial, Pittsburgh
Duquesne, Pittsburgh
Fort Pitt, Pittsburgh
Heary, Pittsburgh
Powers, Rochester
Seneca, Rochester
Planters, St. Louis
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Jefferson, St. Louis
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Jefferson, Richmond
Oliver, South Bend
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The McCrum-Howell Co. is the largest concern in the vacuum cleaning line—a \$7,000,000 corporation with five manufacturing plants. Its devices range from portable electric cleaners to mammoth installations supplying vacuum to twenty operators or more at one time. Its engineering department is at all times at the service of architects, engineers and others who are confronted with new or difficult or unusual vacuum cleaning problems.

The McCrum-Howell Co. is licensed to make stationary vacuum plants under the basic *Kenney patent*, and it owns or controls 84 other vital vacuum cleaning patents. For full information regarding either stationary vacuum cleaning plants or 10-pound portable suction cleaners, send the coupon.

SEND Information about the advantages and economy of "Built-in-the-House" Vacuum Cleaning for the buildings checked below

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|------------------------------------|--|--|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Hotel | <input type="checkbox"/> Garage 504 | <input type="checkbox"/> Factory |
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If you are interested in a ten pound electrical Portable Cleaner, check here ☐

Name

Address

Mail to The McCrum-Howell Co.
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Model "Ranger" bicycle furnished by us. Our agents everywhere are making money fast. *Write at once for full particulars and special offer. NO MONEY REQUIRED* until you receive and approve of your bicycle. We ship to anyone, anywhere in the U. S. *without a cent deposit in advance, prepaid freight, and allow TEN DAYS' FREE TRIAL* during which time you may ride the bicycle and put it to any test you wish. If you are then not perfectly satisfied or do not wish to keep the bicycle you may ship it back to us at our expense and you will not be out one cent.

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We furnish the highest grade bicycles it is possible to make at one small profit above the actual factory cost. You save \$10 to \$25 middlemen's profits by buying direct of us and have the manufacturer's guarantee behind your bicycle. **DO NOT BUY a bicycle or a pair of tires from anyone at any price until you receive our catalogues and learn our unheard of factory prices and remarkable special offer.**

YOU WILL BE ASTONISHED

when you receive our beautiful catalogue and study our superb models at the wonderful low prices we can make you. We sell the highest grade bicycles at lower prices than any other factory. We are satisfied with \$1.00 profit above factory cost. **BICYCLE DEALERS**, you can sell our bicycles under your own name plate at double our prices. Orders filled the day received.

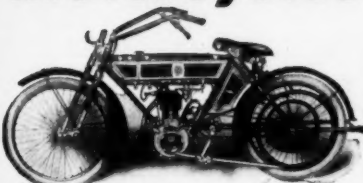
SECOND HAND BICYCLES—a limited number taken in trade by our Chicago retail stores will be closed out at once, at \$3 to \$5 each. Descriptive bargain list mailed free.

TIRES, COASTER BRAKE—new wheels, inner tubes, lamps, cyclometers, parts, repairs and everything in the bicycle line at half usual prices. **DO NOT WAIT**—but write today for us to get everything. Write it now.

Large Catalogue beautifully illustrated and containing a great fund of interesting matter and useful information. It only costs a postal

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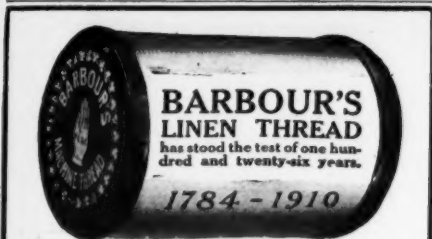
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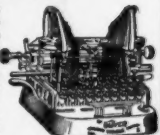
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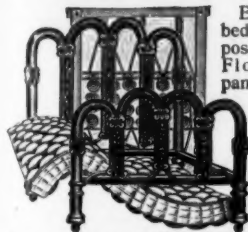
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(Borated)

Skin Soap

Put the two on your dresser
use them alternately and
in a week you will know
which you prefer and
why Mennen's is constantly
growing in favor.

At all druggists, or mailed on
receipt of 25 cents postpaid.
Sample for 4 cents in stamp.

Gerhard Mennen Co., Newark, N.J.



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If your dealer can not supply you we will send direct, charges prepaid, anywhere East of the Rocky Mountains, at following price:

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Money back if not satisfied.

The James E. Pepper Distilling Company
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Write for Our Free Book on Home Refrigeration

It tells you how to select the Home Refrigerator—how to know the good from the poor—how to keep a Refrigerator sweet and sanitary—how your food can be properly protected and preserved—how to keep down ice bills—lots of things you should know before selecting any Refrigerator.

Don't be deceived by claims being made for other so-called "porcelain" refrigerators. The "Monroe" has the only real porcelain food compartments made in a pottery and in one piece of solid, unbreakable White Porcelain Ware over an inch thick, with every corner rounded, no cracks or crevices anywhere. There are no hiding places for germs—no odors, no dampness.



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The leading hospitals use the "Monroe" exclusively and it is found today in a large majority of the very best homes. It is built to last a lifetime and will save you its cost many times over in ice bills, food waste and repair bills.

The "Monroe" is never sold in stores, but direct from the factory to you, freight prepaid to your railroad station, under our liberal trial offer and an ironclad guarantee of "full satisfaction or money refunded."

Easy Payments We depart this year from our rule of all cash with order and will send the "Monroe" freight prepaid on our liberal credit terms to all desiring to buy that way.

Just say, "Send Monroe Book," on a postal card and it will go to you by next mail. (10)

MONROE REFRIGERATOR COMPANY, Station Y, Lockland, Ohio



Always sold DIRECT and at Factory Prices. Cash or Monthly Payments.



Magnificent Steel Launch \$96

Complete With Engine, Ready to Run

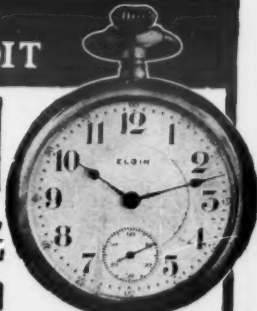
15-20-25 and 27 ft. boats at proportionate prices. All launches tested and fitted with Detroit two-cycle reversible engines with speed controlling lever—simplest engine made—starts without cranking—has only 3 moving parts—anyone can run it. The Safe Launch—absolutely non-sinkable—needs no bosthous. All boats fitted with air-tight compartments—can not sink, leak or rust. We are sole owners of the patents for the manufacture of rolled steel, lock-seamed steel boats. Orders filled the day they are received. Boats shipped to every part of the world. Free Catalog. Steel Rowboats, \$20. (31)
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Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

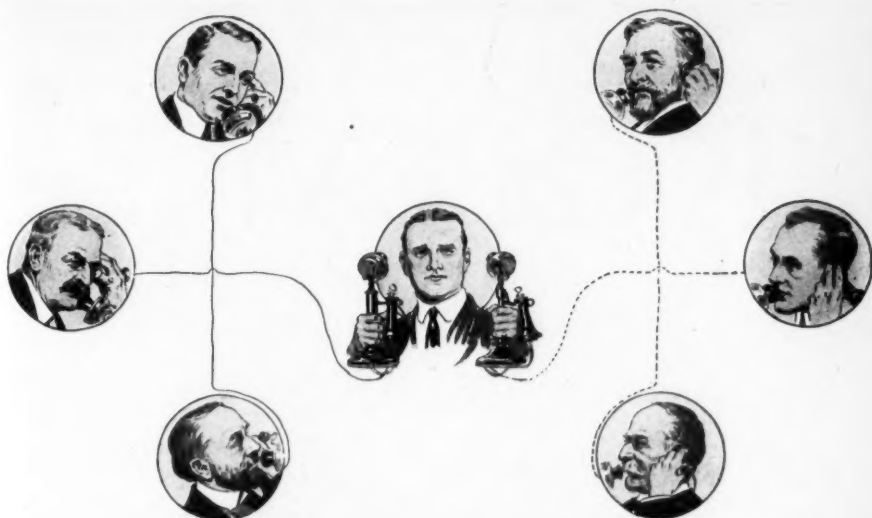
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Is our Registered and common-law Trade-Mark and cannot be rightfully applied except to goods of our manufacture.

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Half Service Or Double Expense

TWO telephone systems in one town mean a divided community or a forced duplication of apparatus and expense.

Some of the people are connected with one system, some are connected with the other system; and each group receives partial service.

Only those receive full service who subscribe for the telephones of both systems.

Neither system can fully meet the needs of the public, any more than a single system could meet the needs of the public if cut in two and half the telephones discontinued.

What is true of a single community is true of the country at large.

The Bell System is established on the principle of one system and one policy, to meet the demands for universal service, a whole service for all the people.



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WHEN are you going to find out whether the fire insurance you have paid for is really good or not—before or after the fire which makes it due and payable? You **cannot** change it after the fire. It will be too late **then**, but before the fire you can readily, at no extra cost, select an insurance company whose record and strength guarantee the liberal fulfillment of its obligations.

Upon foundations of commercial honor the **Hartford Fire Insurance Company** has built up the largest fire insurance business in the United States. It has paid more than **\$140,000,000** to its policy-holders. Its popularity is the reward of merit, and the result of over a century of honorable dealings with its patrons.

When next you insure, tell the agent the Company you want.

INSIST ON THE HARTFORD

Agents Everywhere

"Standard" GUARANTEED PLUMBING FIXTURES



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HE artistic perfection of "Standard" guaranteed plumbing fixtures, combined with their lasting sanitary worth, makes them a permanent investment in satisfaction and comfort.

They add a value to your house far greater than their cost and are as enduring as the house itself. Their installation means certainty of service.

The Plumbing Fixtures shown in this advertisement cost approximately \$140.00, except when sold in the Far West.

Genuine "Standard" fixtures for the home and for schools, Office Buildings, Public Institutions, etc., are identified by the Green and Gold Label with one exception. There are two classes of our Guaranteed Baths, the Green and Gold Label Bath and the Red and Black Label Bath. The Green and Gold Label Bath is triple

enameled. It is guaranteed for five years. The Red and Black Label Bath is double enameled. It is guaranteed for two years. If you would avoid dissatisfaction and expense, install guaranteed fixtures. All fixtures purporting to be "Standard" are spurious unless they bear our guarantee label.

Send for a copy of our beautiful book "Modern Bathrooms." It will prove of invaluable assistance in the planning of your bathroom, kitchen or laundry. Many model rooms are illustrated costing from \$78 to \$600. This valuable book is sent for 6c. postage.

Standard Sanitary Mfg. Co.

Dept. O. PITTSBURGH, PA.

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Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



Bon Ami

IF you polish kitchen and metal ware with coarse scouring soap, you are scraping, grinding, and *scratching* the dirt away. The metal is cleaned, but you have covered it with fine scratches.

The next time you polish it, you scratch it more and it becomes a little harder to clean the next time.

Gradually the metal loses its ability to take a good polish and its network of scratches catches the dirt and holds it so that it never looks really bright and new.

The Bon Ami way is better. Bon Ami *doesn't scratch*, but it *does clean*.

If you start with a new article you will find, years later, that it still has the same smooth surface that it had when new.

There will be no scratches on it; it will be just as easy to clean and will not need polishing as often.

Bon Ami is best for cleaning windows, glassware, porcelain, painted woodwork and polishing all kinds of metal ware.

20 years
on the market.
"Hasn't scratched yet"



Swift's Premium Bacon

(Sliced)
in glass jars



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Swift & Company

Next time you order bacon, ask for

Swift's Premium (Sliced) in glass jars

This is the best and most convenient way to buy it. Every jar is packed with thin, savory slices of the best bacon in the world—made mild and sweet by Swift's Premium method of curing. Kept clean and in prime, fresh condition by being sealed air-tight until you use it.

Remember the label and order *Swift's Premium* next time.

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North, East, South or West, you will find Coca-Cola. And find it the beverage that everybody (all classes, ages and sexes) drinks and likes.

So don't forget---while you're waiting for your vacation time to come around, make the best of heat and weariness and impatience by treating yourself to

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When you're on your vacation, put an edge to your enjoyment---with **Coca-Cola**.

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